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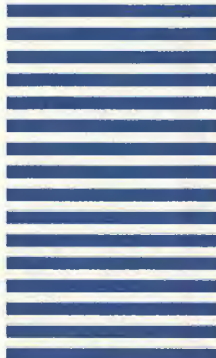
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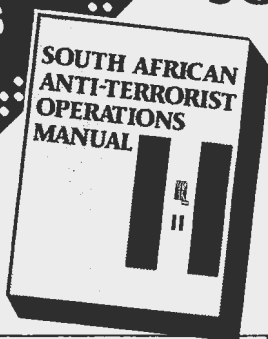
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COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

THE new firearms law has good news and bad news. Most of it's good. So let's get the bad news out of the way first.

The Volkmer-McClure Bill bans the new manufacture or importation of automatic weapons for sale to law-abiding citizens. As all you outraged, law-abiding machine-gun owners may already know, the amendment aimed at machine guns was a cheap shot by U.S. Rep. William J. Hughes (D-N.J.), probably a last-gasp effort at some small sense of victory in what clearly was a defeat for the anti-gun crowd. What better way to do so than pick on a small group, machine-gunners?

The existing law works well. But Hughes and his ilk argue that the Hughes Amendment will reduce crime. They ignore the fact that not one crime has been committed with a legally owned machine gun since the National Firearms Act of 1934 was passed. That transfer law and World War II are about the only two U.S. programs in 52 years that succeeded. But before you decide the new law is a bust, look at the good news.

The Volkmer-McClure Bill kills many of the strict — and often unreasonable — rules applying to firearm ownership and dealer transfer. Before, an honest mistake by a dealer selling a firearm or ammunition often meant a trip to court. In fact, over 70 percent of the people prosecuted for firearms violations like these had no previous criminal record. Now the court must show that someone willingly and knowingly violated the law to establish guilt.

Another plus of the new law: Per-

sons may transport a firearm through areas where possession may be illegal, provided that the firearm is unloaded and inaccessible and possession complies with local laws in departure and arrival points. In the past, a hunter traveling with his firearm from Pennsylvania to Maine via New York was in violation of the law as soon as he entered New York.

Another provision in the bill eliminates all paperwork concerning the sale of ammunition to the public. That's certainly welcome news to anyone who has forgotten his ID when trying to buy handgun ammo.

The lawmakers who supported this bill were representing the rights of all legal gun owners. They could hardly vote against the bill simply because Hughes came down hard on machine-gun owners at the last minute. Besides, no smart politician would sacrifice the greater good of the measure in order to defend machine-gun ownership as an inalienable right, one more important than other positive aspects of the bill.

Most important, the Volkmer-McClure Bill represents a major victory for gun owners. The NRA and its membership have clearly demonstrated that democracy works. The strength of their numbers will continue to be a force to be reckoned with in the political arena. The mission now is to use that strength constructively to win back the rights of law-abiding machine-gun owners. We are glad that Congress has reduced its tendency to infringe on our right to keep and bear arms. But we must not rest until machine-gun owners regain the rights denied them. ✘



SOLDIER OF FORTUNE (ISSN 0145-6784/USPS 120-510) is published monthly by SOLDIER OF FORTUNE Magazine, Inc., Boulder, Colorado, Second Class Postage Paid at Boulder, CO. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SOLDIER OF FORTUNE, Subscription Department, P.O. Box 348, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. Subscription rates for twelve monthly issues: \$26.00 — U.S.A., Canada, Mexico. All other countries, \$33.00. Special domestic and foreign rates on request. U.S. FUNDS ONLY. Single-Issue Price — U.S., \$3.00; United Kingdom, 2.40; Canada, \$3.50.

CONTRIBUTORS: Manuscripts, photographs, drawings are submitted at the contributor's own risk. Material should be mailed to Articles Editor, SOLDIER OF FORTUNE, Copyright © 1986 by SOLDIER OF FORTUNE Magazine, Inc. All Rights Reserved

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COVER: A mujahid firing a ChiCom AKS covers a recoilless rifle during an attack on an Afghan army post in Kandahar. After almost seven years of fighting, the end still isn't in sight. A critical lack of ammunition and a shortage of heavy weapons to battle Soviet MiGs and Hinds make the war a rough one for the freedom fighters, but they are still as determined as ever. SOF's special Afghanistan coverage begins on page 38, including a first-time look at the Soviets' new PKPE-1 multiple grenade launching system. Photo: Jake Border

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BUILDING TRADITION...

Sirs:

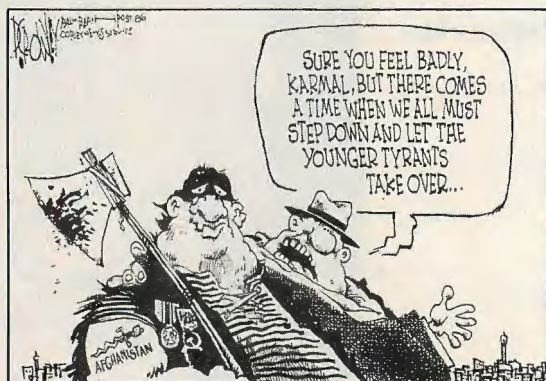
I am hoping that SOF readers can help me. I am stationed at Fort Harrison, Indiana, and instruct in the Recruiting and Retention School. We are trying to start a collection of military patches and crests, primarily from the Vietnam era, in the main hall of the classrooms. Most of our students are young soldiers who never spent any time in combat, and we would like to have a memorial to the combat soldier. The items would be displayed in glass cases, locked, and would be handled only by myself or SFC Robb, another instructor at the school. We have collected a few things — Special Forces coins, six patches and 16 unit crests — and would greatly appreciate any donations to build up our display. (Please, no firearms; edged weapons or any other militaria are very welcome.) My mailing address is: MSG James S. Powers, RCD RRS USASSI, Column 104G, Bldg. 1, Fort Harrison, IN 46216.

J. Powers
Fort Harrison,
Indiana

Master Sergeant Powers is a three-tour Vietnam vet.



FLAK



BUCK BLUES...

Sirs:

Although the BuckMaster is overburdened with questionable gimmicks, it is a functional, affordable blade. It is true that some SEAL personnel who carry the BuckMaster have offered negative comments about its ability to function under the duress of SEAL requirements. But they put far more stress on a knife than you or I would. The point is that although Buck has exploited the SEAL connection in their marketing program, they will also verify that the knife has not been accepted for official use or issue by the SEALs.

Greg Walker
Bend, Oregon

I take exception to Bill Bagwell's repeated denigration of hollow-handled, sawtoothed survival knives. Bagwell subjects these knives to abuse they just weren't designed to withstand. Conversely, we get little information about how the sawteeth perform their intended application. And what *is* the best application for sawteeth? Well, I've found the larger sawtooth blades make indispensable back scratchers.

Rich McCormack
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

I wanted to let you know that I put Bill Bagwell's article ("BuckMaster — Big Blade Busts," SOF, July '86) to good use. I live near the Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, and came close to buying one of the BuckMasters. Then I read Bagwell's article and immediately sent a letter to the CO of the Naval Exchange Retail Store requesting he withdraw the BuckMaster without delay. I also requested that he forward my letter and the Bagwell article to the head office of the Naval Exchange System. The good news is that I was unofficially informed that the BuckMaster would be withdrawn from the sporting goods department at the exchange. I feel confident that the BuckMaster will be withdrawn worldwide from all military exchanges.

Maj. Bob McCauley, USAF (Ret.)
Oak Harbor, Washington

AND BUCK RESPONDS...

Sirs:

We are obviously concerned about some of the adverse test results [on the BuckMaster] reported in your magazine. The BuckMaster has undergone considerable testing by many other organizations which reported their high opinions of that knife. In addition, we have never had a report of a failure in the field by any user. We have duplicated the test mentioned in your magazine and found that some BuckMasters will fail under certain conditions of much higher-than-normal stress due to the hardness of the extra-thick 425 modified, high-carbon, high-chrome steel blade. We have taken steps to change the heat treatment process which will eliminate the types of failures reported. To reassure any of your readers who may have a BuckMaster, we will replace any BuckMaster that fails in any way. We are proud of the knife, and judging by the number of firms that have made unauthorized copies, we feel that the BuckMaster has been a trend-setter in the marketplace.

Charles T. Buck, President
Buck Knives

NORTHERN IRELAND IRE...

Sirs:

I am writing in response to a letter from Gene Sullivan printed in the May FLAK column in which he disagreed with an earlier SOF article on the Provisional Irish Republican Army. I'd be interested in hearing his reasoning in referring to members of the PIRA as people suffering from "British Colonial oppression." I know I'll be accused of being another biased Brit, but I'd like to know what makes a Libyan who bombs a TWA jet a "terrorist" whereas an Irishman who kills women and children in a bombing campaign is termed a "freedom fighter." As far as I'm concerned they're both close relatives of Khaddafi and should be dealt with in the same way.

Alasdair Carter
County Durham, United
Kingdom

I am an active-duty Army Airborne Ranger Infantry captain, and an Irish Catholic, and my wife

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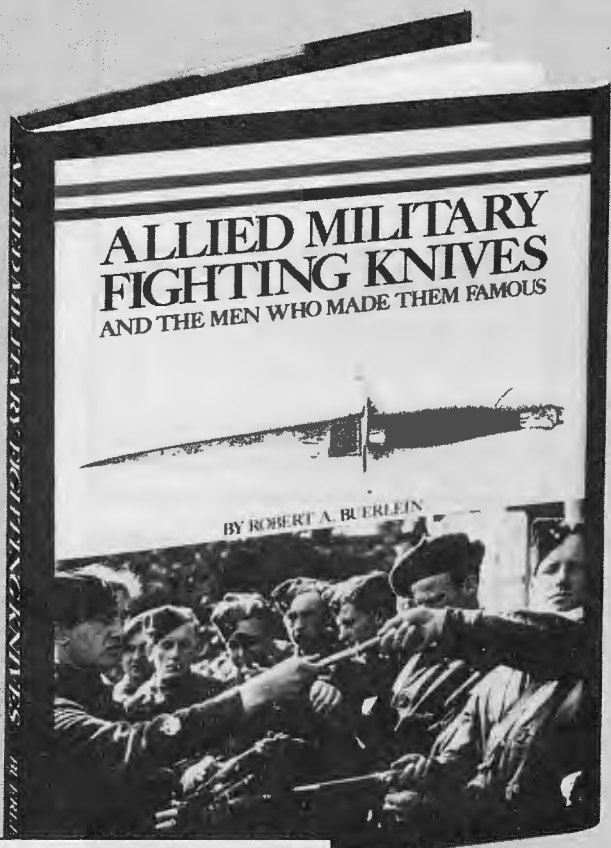
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Founder, U.S. Army Special Forces



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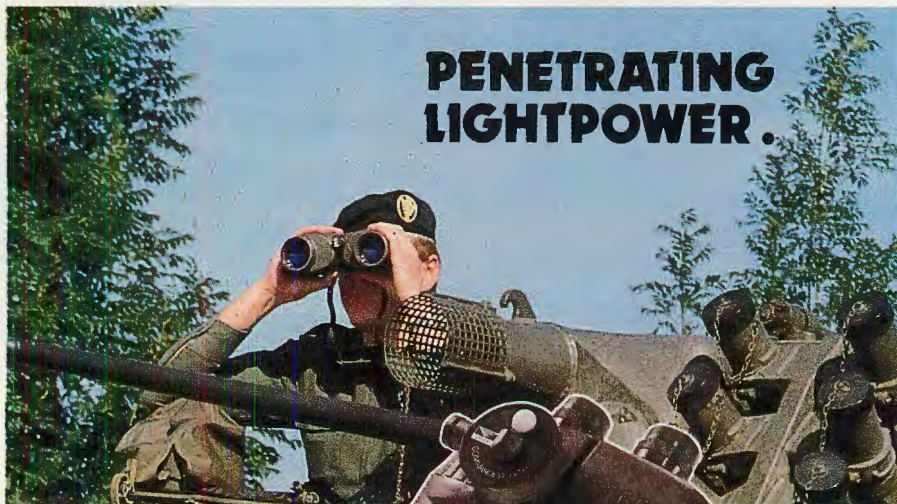
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and I recently visited the town of Enniskillen in County Fermanagh which borders the Irish Republic. After telling one gentleman that my family came from the town, he told me not to let anyone know because I might be targeted by the IRA — even if I was a Yank. Many Irish Catholics I talked with said there were a lot of Mafia-type tactics being conducted by the IRA; protection rackets were being run where the local Provos solicit money from Catholic-owned companies in order that they be left alone. Many companies will not work on government projects due to their fear of IRA reprisals. All the problems don't stem from the IRA, however. The Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), made up almost entirely of Protestants, conducts roadside checks and in the past used their power to harass Catholics who had to travel the road. When I passed through one of their checkpoints I noticed that they looked like a bunch of dirtbags. There's been talk of their disbandment; not a bad idea since a sectarian force causes more problems than it solves. Your article on the IRA made the Provos look like terrorists, which they are, but the folks in the UDR are not all white knights, either.

Capt. Gerald Timoney Jr.
Fort Jackson, South Carolina



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COVER MANIA...

Sirs:

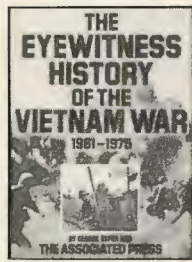
I've got to be honest with you. I'm tired of seeing covers with guys like Rambo and the Terminator on them. The only wars these guys ever fought was at the box office. Or how about those two who are riding the motorcycle through the woods waving their gun? I can't think of a faster way to meet your maker other than running through a minefield wearing snowshoes. How about running covers of the POWs or MIAs? We at least owe them that small token of appreciation.

B. Hennie
Oakview, California

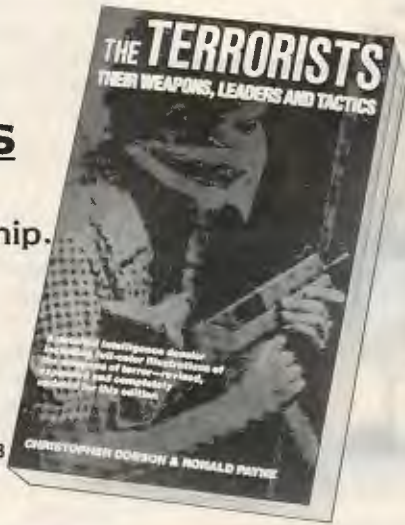
As SOF readers know, the ongoing POW/MIA debacle is one of our highest priorities. Check out the July 1986 cover of SOF for Ed Condra's powerful statement on this issue, and SOF editor Jim Pate's in-depth report on the questionable methods used by the Army's Central Identification Lab in identifying POW/MIA remains. And look for SOF's upcoming special POW/MIA edition.

What makes a terrorist tick?

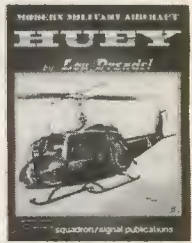
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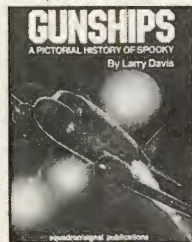
+0422 \$9.95



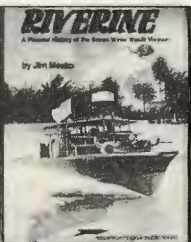
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0513 Spec. ed.



0034 Spec. ed.



3129 Spec. ed.



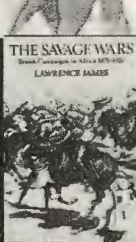
3111 \$18.95



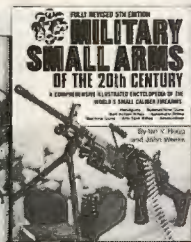
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1065 \$17.95



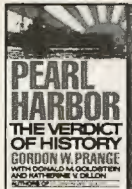
1495 \$19.95



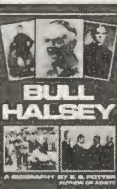
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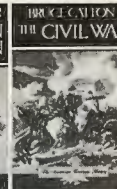
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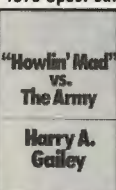
0596 \$28.50



1198 \$17.95



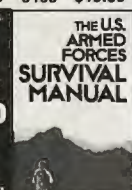
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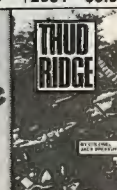
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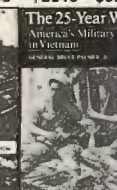
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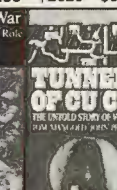
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PEACE PARK PETERS OUT...

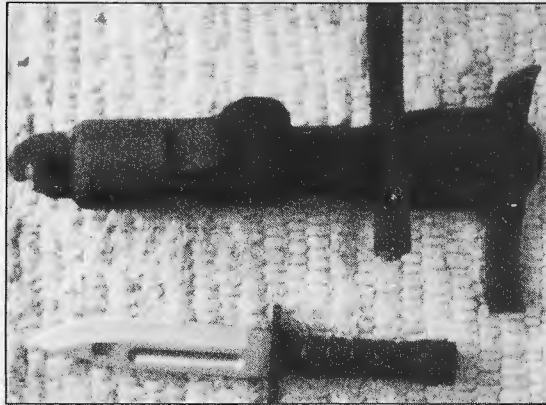
Efforts to build a "Vietnam Victory Memorial" — a proposal to commemorate Vietnam anti-war protesters — petered out after U.S. Senator Dennis DeConcini of Arizona filed a "friend of the court" brief in a related lawsuit.

Terry Choate, a Phoenix cab driver, wanted to erect a 22-foot concrete shaft topped by a 4-foot peace symbol. A Vietnamese flag would fly next to it on a lot he owns a block south of Interstate 10 at 183rd Drive near the Perryville exit. Nearby property owners filed suit alleging that the memorial would violate deed restrictions for the subdivision.

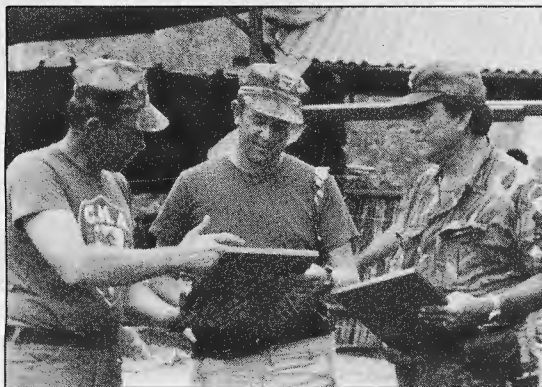
The *Arizona Republic* said Choate "is willing to build a memorial without the flag of communist Vietnam if veterans groups promise to stop harassing him." He cited bodily threats and the unwillingness of contractors to consider the project. His attorney declined comment except to say "I don't want a bunch of veterans coming after me."

After a brief was filed in the suit by DeConcini and Maricopa County Supervisor Carole Carpenter, Arizona Superior Court Judge Rudolph J. Gerber issued a temporary restraining order halting the project and prohibiting a Vietnamese flag from being flown. Carpenter said she believed there would be a "potential for riot. He came very close to inciting people to violence." On the advice of his attorney, Comrade Choate prudently chose to settle out of court.

BULLETIN BOARD



Here's a sneak preview of what may be the next service-issue bayonet for the Army and the Marine Corps. Submitted by Phrobis III (Dept. SOF, 3204 Production Ave., Suite G, Oceanside, CA 92054), this is one of six models selected as finalists in the U.S. Army RADCOR's XM-9 bayonet selection program. The Phrobis entry employs an all-modular concept, with an emphasis on utility. The bayonet and the sheath weigh a total of 1.796 lbs. Overall bayonet length is 12 inches. The Phrobis III bayonet/utility/fighting knife has among its many features a bottle opener, sawteeth for aluminum and a wire cutter, an improved version of the one found on the Soviet AK bayonet.



Now known by a new name — **Civilian Materiel Assistance** — CMA has broadened its resources with the selection of Herbert Humphreys Jr. as a board member and chairman of the national advisory board. Humphreys is flanked in the accompanying photo by Tom Posey, left, a CMA founder and director, and Colonel Enrique Bermudez, field commander of the Democratic Force of Nicaragua. Bermudez presented Posey and Humphreys with plaques of appreciation. Among other activities, Humphreys is active in real estate and hotels in the United States and the Caribbean. The military veteran is a pilot, deep sea diver, licensed ship captain and an avid treasure hunter.

REUNIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS...

The 4th annual reunion of the **Rhodesian Veterans' Association** will be held in **Las Vegas on 19-21 Sept.** For information on attending, call: **Sam Hinze at (501) 673-4644.**

The **101-OSS Central Region Reunion** is scheduled for **19-21 Sept. in Kansas City, Mo.** The reunion will be held at The Phillips House, 106 W. 12th St., phone (816) 221-7000. Rooms, which are \$35 for a single and \$40 for a double, must be reserved by 5 Sept. For more information, write or call: **Jack McConaughy, 3339 Glenbrook Dr., Lansing, MI 48911/ (517) 393-2549.**

The **Third Annual Freedom Cup Practical Pistol Match**, sponsored by the Shongum Sportsmans Association of Ledgewood, N.J., is set for **27-28 Sept.** It is a seven-stage match requiring about 175 rounds to complete. Prize sponsors and contributions are being sought. Interested persons should contact: **John Porto, 211 Glen Rd., Mountainside, NJ 07092.**

Organizers are trying to put together a reunion of former members of the **281st Assault Helicopter Co. attached to Project Delta's 5th SFG.** The target date is 1 Oct. in St. Louis, Mo. The 281st presently is a reserve unit near St. Louis due to have its colors retired and be combined with another unit on 1 Oct. Interested persons should call or write the following: **Bob Marker, 5914 Ranchito Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91401, (818) 994-7232, or Paul Maledy, 4757 Private Lane, St. Charles, MO 63301, (314) 447-6374.**

PRO-SOVIET AFGHANS...

A Soviet plan aimed at destabilizing the government of Pakistan through a pro-communist guerrilla insurgency was signaled by a tribal *jirga* in Kabul. Pathan tribal leaders from Afghanistan and Pakistan — as well as Afridis, Shinwanis, Waziris and Hill Mohmands — met with Soviet military commanders, who promised that their future lay with the Kremlin's puppet regime in Kabul. They were promised gold and Kalashnikovs in return for their

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WP-127, Navy Blue, w/epaulets	36-46	WP-171, US Army Black, w/epaulets & patch	32-50
WP-130, RAF Blue/grey	32-50	WP-176, Black, US Naval Academy	32-50
WP-170, Black	34-46	WP-180, Sand (Tan)	34-46
WP-185, Sand (Tan)	34-46	WP-190, Peat Brown, US Fish & Wildlife Service	32-50
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Colors: (1) Woodland Camo (2) SWAT Black (3)

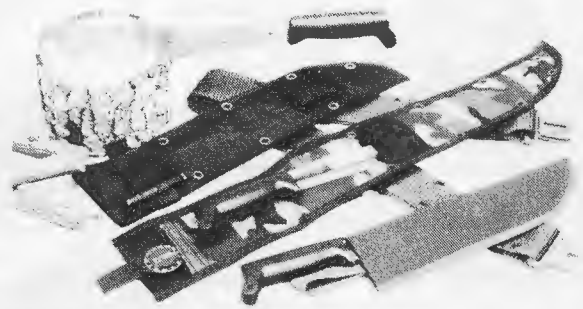
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support in disrupting operations and supply lines of the Afghan anti-communist resistance movement and causing problems for Pakistan.

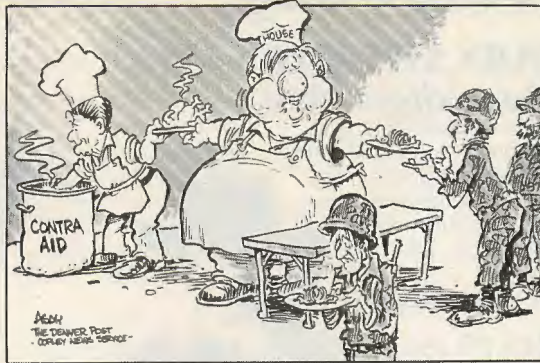
Made up primarily of trans-border traders and smugglers, as well as poppy growers whose fields have been burned by Pakistani troops, the pro-Soviet guerrilla coalition will carry out operations on both sides of the border around Pakistan's northwest frontier. These operations will be coordinated from a special headquarters set up in Jalalabad just inside Afghanistan commanded by a shadowy Russian officer known only as General Sakharov. He is said to be an expert on Pathan tribes and fluent in their language, Pashto, which he learned serving as an adviser to the Afghan army prior to the Soviet invasion in 1979.

So far the plan has met with only limited success, however. Pakistan has increased troop strength along that border, feeding Soviet propaganda reports alleging that the Pakistan government is illegitimate and must rule by force. And some guerrillas accepted Soviet weapons and money, then turned it against the invaders from Moscow. In Afghanistan's Nangrahar Province, large numbers of Afridi and Shinwari tribesmen did assist Kabul's 9th and 11th Divisions in a March 1986 offensive. Although tactical gains were slight, it was a plus for the Soviets because it limited the required commitment of their own troops.

The Kremlin's replacement of Babrak Karmal with Dr. Najibullah in May 1986 promises more of the same bad news for Afghanistan's independence movement. Najibullah's brutally efficient methods have made him hated and feared, even by other devout communists.

KHADAFFI TARGETS...

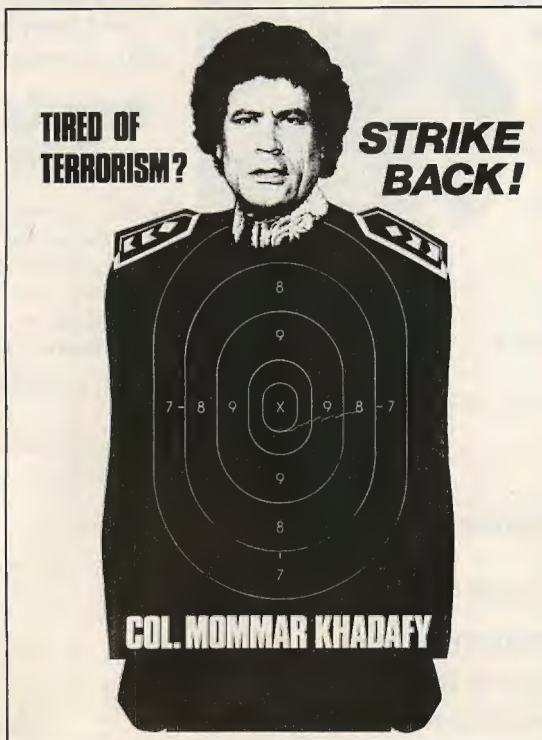
There are about as many ways to spell the name of the demented leader of Libya as there are ways to commit terrorism. And now there are about as many versions of targets with Khadaffi's likeness on them. One of the best we have seen (see photo, 23x35 inches life-size) is being distributed through **The BulletStop, Dept. SOF, 723 Sandtown Rd. SW, Marietta, GA 30060.** The poster/targets are \$2.95 each, plus \$2 shipping and handling. Dealer prices are available upon request.



HAIL TO HIALEAH...

The leaders of at least one U.S. city have the guts for guns that Congress does not. The seven-member Hialeah (Fla.) City Council voted unanimously to send all firearms confiscated by local police to anti-communist rebels in Nicaragua. The working class city of 180,000 — over 80 percent Latino, primarily Cuban — accumulates an unusually large number of weapons. Like most weapons confiscated in southern Florida, most of these come from drug raids. Other cities are being encouraged to donate their confiscated weapons.

Plenty of *nonlethal* aid also is needed. Send your donations of cash, checks or material assistance — boots, socks, ponchos, web gear, bore cleaner, fatigues, etc. (small and medium sizes only, **NO GUNS OR AMMUNITION**) — to: **EI Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.** UPS and other nonpostal shipments may be directed to: *c/o* SOF, 5735 Arapahoe Rd., Boulder, CO 80303.



FUELING MARXIST FIRES...

Anyone looking for a good boycott cause might want to consider Chevron-Gulf products. Were it not for Chevron-Gulf Oil's operation at the Malongo Terminal in Cabinda, Angola's Marxist government probably would have suffered financial collapse. Revenues produced by Chevron-Gulf for that Marxist regime have paid for the continued presence of thousands of Cuban troops and indirectly sponsored the killing of hundreds of anti-communist freedom fighters in Jonas Savimbi's UNITA forces.

UNITA had held off on attacking Chevron-Gulf facilities in Angola because Savimbi will need the millions of petro-dollars if he succeeds in his efforts to overthrow the present regime. That policy apparently has changed, though. This spring, 32 HE rounds from 81mm mortars fell outside the Gulf camp fence, impacting among Cuban troops guarding the compound.

If you see George Keller, chairman of the board of the Chevron Corporation, ask him why his company is sponsoring Soviet-Cuban adventurism in Africa. If you want to get directly involved in opposing Chevron-Gulf's assistance to Marxist governments in Africa, write: **R. Cort Kirkwood, Gulf Out of Angola Project, The Conservative Caucus Inc., Dept. SOF, 450 Maple Ave. East, Vienna, VA 22180, or call (703) 893-1550.**

FEMALE VETS SEEK STATUE...

Diane Carlson Evans of River Falls, Wis., who served as an Army nurse in Vietnam in 1968-69, wants female veterans of that war to get their own memorial. About 10,000 U.S. women served in Vietnam, 7,000 of them as nurses. As a founder of the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project, Ms. Evans is spearheading a national effort to raise \$1 million to commission a 7-foot statue of a female military nurse to stand in the vicinity of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington.



Minneapolis sculptor Rodger Brodin, famed for his portrayal of military subjects, already has created a miniature model for the larger statue. It depicts a sad-eyed, obviously weary military nurse in fatigues, a stethoscope around her neck and her arms cradling a helmet. With the endorsement of several veterans' groups, and elected and public officials, fund-raisers hope to dedicate the statue in November 1987. A thousand 7½-inch replicas have been cast in bronze and are selling for \$250 each to raise money for the project. Those interested in more information or making a contribution should write: **The Vietnam Women's Memorial Project, Dept. SOF, 511 11th Ave. South, Box 45, Minneapolis, MN 55415.** ☒



"The Airmobile Team"

The "grunt" was the backbone of the U.S. war efforts in Vietnam and the UH-1 Huey helicopter was his most important means of transport and support. Max Crace's latest painting emphasizes the teamwork between man and machine in that conflict. The infantry soldier is authentic in every detail from his baseball grenade and extra belt for the squad M-60 machinegun to the unauthorized adornment in his helmet band.

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NO other nation has employed submachine guns in such large numbers as did the Soviet Union in World War II. Armed predominantly with the PPSH-41, Russian soldiers clung to T34 tanks like swarms of angry bees. Their massive numbers and overwhelming firepower turned the tide of battle and stopped the German war machine in its tracks. A lesser-known Soviet submachine gun, the PPS-42 (Pistolet-Pulemyot Sudareva obr 1942G), also served to rain death and destruction on the Wehrmacht.

Clichés aside, few weapons were really born in battle as the PPS-42 was. By 1942 German troops had completely encircled Leningrad, cutting the flow of supplies to the beleaguered defenders. Desperate for weapons, a citizen of the city, an engineer with previous experience only in earth-moving equipment, designed a submachine gun that was immediately produced with the material and machinery on hand. Remarkably, Alexei I. Sudarev's PPS-42 was not only successfully field-tested in actual battle — during the struggle for Leningrad — but possesses few features that merit legitimate criticism. In its final form as the PPS-43 more than one million were eventually produced.

This weapon fires from the conventional open-bolt position by means of advanced-primer ignition. The fixed firing pin ignites the cartridge's primer while the reciprocating parts and the round are still moving forward.

The receiver body and ventilated barrel sleeve are a single heavy-gauge, folded, sheet-metal stamping. All the metal components are phosphate finished and extensive use was made of spot welding, pins and rivets. The barrel shroud portion of the receiver has 20 circular ventilation ports. A one-piece, sheet-metal muzzle brake is welded and riveted to the barrel jacket. Its rear end supports the muzzle end of the barrel. While quite effective in reducing muzzle climb, this brake generates horrendous muzzle blast.

The more common variant of the PPS-42, the PPS-43, has been slightly improved and simplified. The muzzle brake, no longer welded to the bottom of the barrel jacket, is held in position by a metal strap which also supports the barrel. The top of the PPS-43 muzzle brake is stamped and folded to serve as protective ears for the front sight assembly.

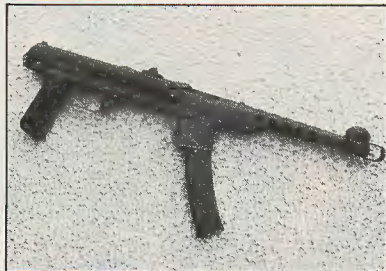
The front sight base and top of the muzzle brake are fastened to the barrel sleeve by two rivets. A round, post-type front sight is adjustable for elevation zero. A flip-type rear sight has two positions marked '10' (100 meters) and '20' (200 meters) with open, square notches adequate for a sub-



FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

Born in Battle: PPS-42/43 SMGs



The improved PPS-43 is easily distinguished from the PPS-42 by the buttplate which stops just short of the ejection port rather than covering it when folded over.

machine gun. The rear sight assembly is also fastened to the receiver by two rivets.

A fixed front sling swivel is spot welded to the left side of the barrel jacket. A sheet-metal bar, welded across the bottom of the receiver to add rigidity and align the lower receiver group, has been folded outward and slotted to form the rear sling swivel.

A four-groove barrel with a right-hand twist is pinned to the receiver body at the chamber end. The barrel and bolt body are the only machined components in the weapon. PPS-42 barrels are 10.75 inches in length. This was shortened to 10 inches on the PPS-43. Most of these barrels are chrome-lined.

Chambering was for the 7.62x25mm cartridge. A few were converted to 9mm Parabellum by the Germans. German nomenclature for the PPS-43 was MP709(r). Some PPS-43s were rebarreled to 9mm when they were reactivated by Class II manufacturers during the 1950s since 7.62x25mm ammunition was at that time difficult to obtain in the United States.

PPS-42/43 submachine guns have an unusual stock which folds over the top of the receiver. All the stock components are either sheet-metal pressings, pins or rivets. The PPS-43 stock is about 2 inches shorter and has an improved locking mechanism. When folded, the buttplate lies just to the rear of the ejection port. PPS-42s can be readily distinguished from the PPS-43 by the buttplate that folds over and surrounds the ejection port.

To unfold the PPS-43 stock, merely lift up the stock assembly and rotate it

backward until it locks in place. Then rotate the buttplate rearward 270 degrees. Although the buttplate has no locking latch, when placed against the shoulder a nub punched into the left side will prevent it from rolling forward. While somewhat wobbly as a firing platform, it's no worse than any of the other collapsible stocks found on submachine guns of the era. To fold the stock back over the receiver, depress a release button on top of the PPS-43 receiver. This spring-loaded button is attached to a shaft which passes through the stock's axis pin to push down the crosspiece that engages the stock's locking notches.

With the stock folded the PPS-43 is 24.25 inches in length. The PPS-42 is 1 inch longer. Overall length with the stock extended is 32.25 inches for the PPS-43 and 35.7 inches for the PPS-42. The PPS-42 weighs 6.5 pounds, empty, but modifications on the PPS-43 increased it to 7.4 pounds.

The PPS-43 bolt group contains a unique feature. While PPS-42 was fitted with the usual fixed ejector, Sudarev altered it on the PPS-43 by removing the fixed ejector and cutting a channel along the left side of the bolt body in which rests the front portion of the recoil spring and its guide rod. A large steel pin, attached to the guide rod, fits into a hole drilled through the bolt body and permits the bolt to travel rearward and compress the recoil spring while the guide rod remains in place to protrude beyond the bolt face, acting as a "bump" ejector to drive the empty case around the extractor and out the ejection port. The fixed firing pin, milled into the bolt face, and the extractor are of conventional design.

The retracting handle is a flat bar welded to the bolt body. The recoil spring and guide rod are attached to a fiber buffer (usually leather on the PPS-42) with a steel backing.

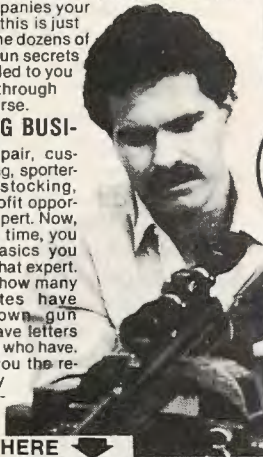
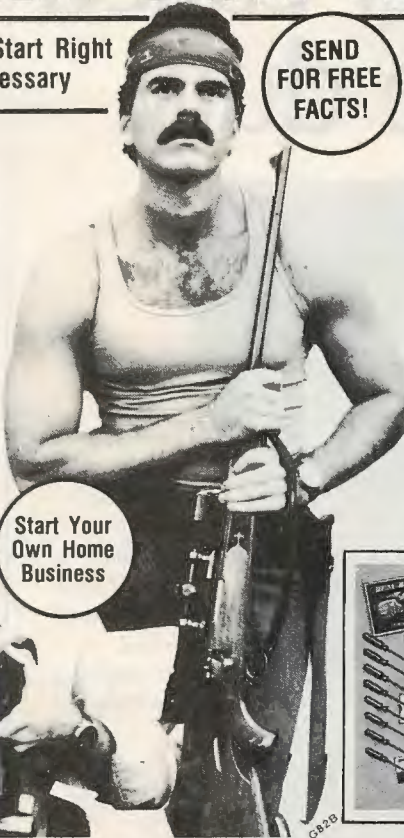
Within, or attached to, the lower receiver is the trigger mechanism, pistol grip and magazine well. The retracting handle rides above the two rails on top of the lower receiver's side walls, one bent inward on the left side, the other folded outward on the right side. Simple, but somewhat peculiar, the trigger mechanism has no provision for semi-automatic fire. That's acceptable, as

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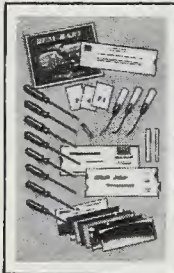
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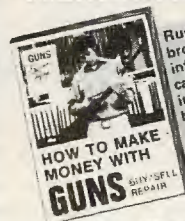
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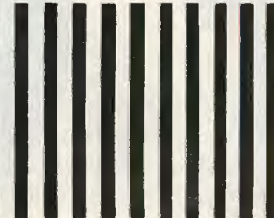
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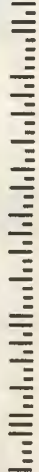
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the cyclic rate has been lowered from the PPSH-41's 900 rpm to a very proper 650 rpm. Experienced operators will have no problem firing single shots from a PPS-43.

The trigger is connected to the sear by an axis pin. When pulled back, the sear rotates downward out of engagement with a notch on the bolt's underside, permitting the force of the compressed recoil spring to propel the bolt group forward. The trigger spring is coiled around a rod to the rear of the trigger. When the trigger is released this spring pushes the trigger forward to rotate the sear upward to engage the bolt's notch and halt the bolt in the retracted position. The trigger spring and rod are also components in the latching mechanism that holds the upper and lower receivers together. Trigger pull weight on my specimen is 3 pounds — far too light for a sub-machine gun.

A safety bar is located on the front of the trigger guard, on the right side. The axis pin connecting the sear and trigger projects into a cutout on this sheet-metal bar. When the safety is pushed rearward, it prevents the pin's downward movement and thus blocks the sear and trigger. If the bolt is forward the safety bar will also block the retracting handle. Slide it forward with the trigger finger to place the weapon in the firing mode.

Pistol grip panels were usually wood on the PPS-42, always black, hard rubber (prone to cracking) on the PPS-43. Rubber grip panels carry the Soviet 'C' within three nested diamonds. The pistol grip's size, configuration and grip-to-frame angle are excellent.

A stamped sheet-metal magazine well is spot welded into the lower receiver, pitched forward at a steeper angle on the PPS-43. The catch-release lever must be pushed forward to withdraw the magazine. Accidental release is inhibited by a protective hood surrounding the catch-release lever and welded to the magazine well. A sturdy two-position-feed, stamped sheet-metal curved box magazine with a 35-round capacity locks firmly into the well. PPSH-41 35-round box magazines or 71-round drums cannot be employed.

PPS-42/43 submachine guns are extremely easy to disassemble, a salient characteristic of Soviet small arms. First, remove the magazine and clear the weapon by retracting the bolt and then releasing it under control. Depress the receiver lock at the end of the lower receiver and swing the lower receiver down on its axis pin away from the upper receiver. Retract the bolt slightly and lift the bolt group and re-

Continued on page 99

Protected by one or more of the following: US Patent Nos. 4,485,947; 4,485,948. Other US and foreign patents pending.

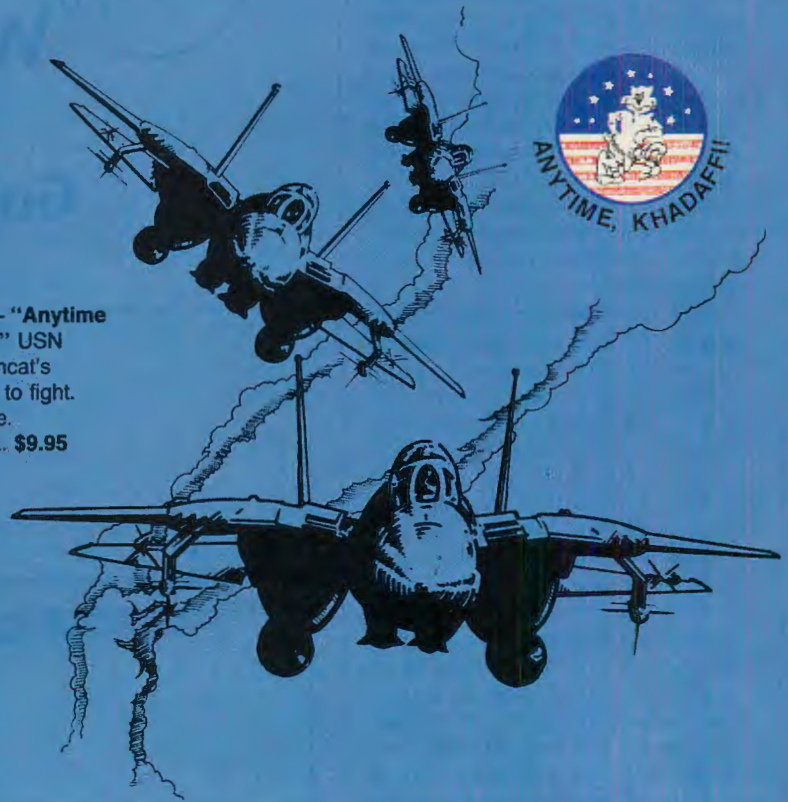


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HAVING spent the better part of 30 years with some kind of handgun stuck down the front of my trousers you would think that I would have a preference for the one I want to carry into combat by now. Well, I had decided on one — the venerable .45 — and I never realized there would come a time when I would change my mind. I'd have bet money that the .45 would be with me until the day I died. But after spending the last two years in El Salvador I have changed my mind, or rather, I had it changed for me by circumstances.

El Salvador is a war zone no matter where you go, be it in the mountains or in downtown San Salvador, and like the man says, you pay your dime and you take your chances. Unlike most other places, in El Salvador the handgun is your primary weapon and getting into a firefight with an eight-shot weapon is no fun. It's even less fun when the other side outnumbers you four or five to one and is armed with submachine guns or assault rifles.

An ambush is an ambush, whether it's in the bush or sitting in a café in downtown San Salvador. The outcome is always the same — someone gets wounded or killed. Whoever can gain fire superiority is going to win. If you are lucky enough to survive the first three or four seconds of the fight, it comes down to keeping the bad guys off you and trying to kill as many of them as possible.

When I first went to El Salvador I noticed that the most popular weapons were the Browning HP and the 9mm Berettas — both hold a bunch of bullets. After living there for two years I, too, pack a large-capacity handgun and two or more fresh magazines on my belt. Why? You think the Maytag repairman feels lonely, try getting caught downtown when the lights go out and you are the only gringo in sight. All you have between you and early retirement is your handgun.

About this time I imagine all you steely-eyed advocates of the .45 are thinking, "Bullshit. I've faced off three targets and dumped six rounds in the kill zone in under eight seconds and taken on 26 targets at the local IPSC assault course in 60 seconds while running 50 yards with all hits in the kill zone. Now this guy is telling me I need to be carrying one of those puny 9mm pistols that holds 20 rounds. Those large-capacity pistols are for people who can't hit anything. I'll give up my .45 when they pry it out of my cold dead fingers." Well, that's probably just what they'll do.

A friend of mine who is a pilot in the Salvadoran air force was out on the town one night. As he was starting to



COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by Harry Claffin

Going Extra Rounds



The extra rounds in Beretta's 9mm 92 SB could make the difference between winning and losing a gunfight.

get into his car three men jumped him, knocked him down, and opened fire. By the time he had hit the ground he had his pistol out and had pumped three rounds into the closest assailant. Shifting fire, he was able to hit the second man and put him down, and the third, seeing this was not turning out the way it was supposed to, jumped into my friend's car and took off. My friend came off the sidewalk and started pumping rounds into his own car and killed the third bad guy.

Lucky? You bet. Would he have been able to kill all three with an eight-shot weapon? Would he be able to

change mags in time to get all three? Not likely. The chances are the third one would have gotten away with his car and lived to fight another day. Total time for this shootout was about 10 seconds. The weapon? A Browning HP. Being able to respond quickly to a violent threat and gain fire superiority saved my friend's life.

Even in El Salvador it is not socially acceptable to walk into the Hotel Sheraton with an M16 over your shoulder. So the next best thing is to carry a handgun with 21 Winchester Silvertips stuffed into its fat little belly and two more 20-shot mags resting comfortably on your belt. The whole package fits nicely under a roomy shirt. And the best part is you're not as likely to be outgunned as you would be if that weapon in your belt was a .45. ✕

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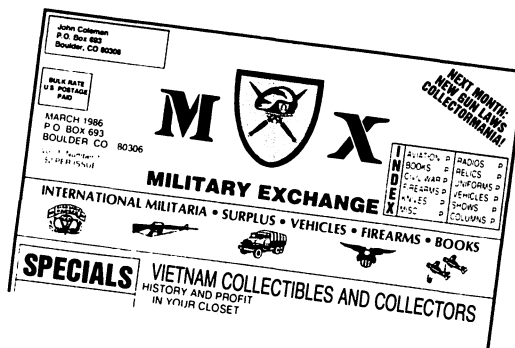
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BATTLE BLADES

by Bill Bagwell

Prolonging Your Knife Life

THE knife is one of man's oldest and most useful tools, the importance of which is clear in many societies. As a result, various knife cultures have developed a complete and elaborate system of care and maintenance as a regular element of their knife etiquette. A case in point is the maintenance of traditional Japanese blades. The finest of these blades are from three to five hundred years old in some cases, and proper care has left them in the same splendid condition today as they were when new. Centuries of use have not destroyed them, and the secret to their longevity is the systematic care they have received. Maybe Westerners could take a page from the book of Japanese blade care.

Americans chose the easy way to extend knife life — make it from tough materials. Stainless-steel knives were introduced into this country shortly after World War II and made popular by the fact that they were stain and rust resistant and required little or no maintenance. To most Americans who own knives, but use them infrequently, a knife that stays shiny without a lot of fuss is the way to go. But those who depend on a knife as a tool or weapon are interested in features such as strength and cutting ability rather than glitter and polish. The nonstainless straight carbon-steel blade offers real advantages in strength, advantages which more than compensate for the amount of care and maintenance required to keep them in top shape.

Up front, you have to accept the fact that most things will deteriorate without at least some maintenance from time to time. The same goes for your knife. If you don't take care of your weapon then the day will come when it won't take care of you. Here are some easily applied common sense tips on knife care that will add years to the life of your blade.

First and foremost, *keep your knife sharp*. A keen edge has the ability to cut with controlled applications of force. A dull blade, on the other hand, requires that excessive pressure be ap-

plied to make a cut, causing the user to lose control of the knife and slip. A small Arkansas stone and a few drops of oil or diesel fuel are all that are required to keep a razor edge on your knife.

Keep the blade clean and dry. If you are going to store the blade for any length of time, a few drops of diesel fuel or Break Free will go a long way in preserving the finish. While a carbon-steel blade with a mirror finish is not highly susceptible to rust, it will rust or tarnish if neglected. The tarnish manifests itself as a grayish surface color on the blade and in no way affects the blade's performance. It can usually be removed by polishing with a good metal polish such as Simichrome, found in most motorcycle shops.

Never put your knife in a wet sheath. Leather is tanned using acids, both natural and manmade, and water accelerates the corrosive action of acid. This is especially true with steel, and you won't like what will happen to your knife blade if you leave it in a wet leather sheath for a couple of hours, let alone overnight. You really shouldn't store your knife in a leather sheath for an extended period of time, either, since a dry sheath will attract atmospheric moisture. Even the stainless steels are not immune to the effects of long-term storage in leather. If you should get your sheath soaked, let it dry thoroughly for 10 days to two weeks naturally, or in an oven at very low heat, then oil the sheath well with a good leather preservative before putting it back in service.

Remember, your knife is not a drill press, hacksaw, wire cutter, can opener, screwdriver or crowbar. And *never* throw your knife. Edged weapons are not designed or tempered for these chores or games. Knife throwing is one of the greatest sins of knife abuse and is the one thing that will void the guarantee on most handmade knives. Knives designed for throwing — and there are such implements — are not really knives in the true sense of the word. They are actually darts or spikes that

have the appearance of knives. Actually, most throwing knives don't even have a functional cutting edge and are tempered so soft that if an edge were actually applied to one, it wouldn't stay sharp for long. Knife throwing can be fun, but in the real world of combat it is about the greatest joke and largest waste of a weapons resource one can imagine.

Knives are not designed to cut bone. Saws and cleavers do a much better job. The leg bones of a deer are some of the toughest bones in nature. I am told that deer leg bones have over twice the compression strength of those of a cow, and over five times the compression strength of the leg bones of a man. Of course, there are times when a knife is the only tool handy for this chore. With this in mind, here's the way to cut bone with your knife if you have no other alternative.

Don't hack on the bone. To do so invites chipping of the edge. If a bone must be cut, find a joint or a seam, and cut the leaders and ligaments surrounding the joint. When done properly, the pieces will fall apart. If you absolutely must cut a bone between the joints and have no tool but your knife, first cut a wooden billy about 18 inches long and about an inch or so in diame-

ter. Place the blade on the bone at the point you plan to make the cut, and tap the back of the blade with the billy. The blade will go through the bone before you know it. This procedure insures that the cutting edge of the knife is



If you don't take care of your knife the day might come when it won't take care of you.

always perpendicular to the bone and that it never strikes a glancing blow at an unfavorable angle. It also insures that the cutting force is always applied to exactly the same point, thus insuring that the cut be made in the shortest possible time with the least effort. A

man who cares about his knife will cut and use a billy; a clod will use a rock.

Do use your knife. You will find that the more you use it, the better friends the two of you will become. There is an old adage that says "beware of the man who shoots only one gun." It is undeniable that a good marksman can shoot well with any firearm that is decently accurate. But give the same man a single weapon and let him use it to the exclusion of others, and his degree of proficiency will become far greater with the weapon with which he is familiar.

Knives are personal weapons. With continued use over an extended period of time, man and weapon become an integrated unit. A man who handles his knife constantly learns the subtleties that enable him to impart the maximum amount of force to the stroke of his blade. He learns to let the knife pivot between his thumb and index finger and to use the force and power that can be generated through the utilization of an active wrist movement for a chopping or slashing stroke. He learns its capabilities and limitations and discovers the value of proper care and maintenance of a weapon that will yield positive and, in some cases, life-saving results. ✕

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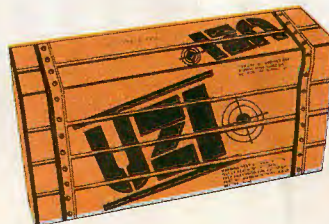
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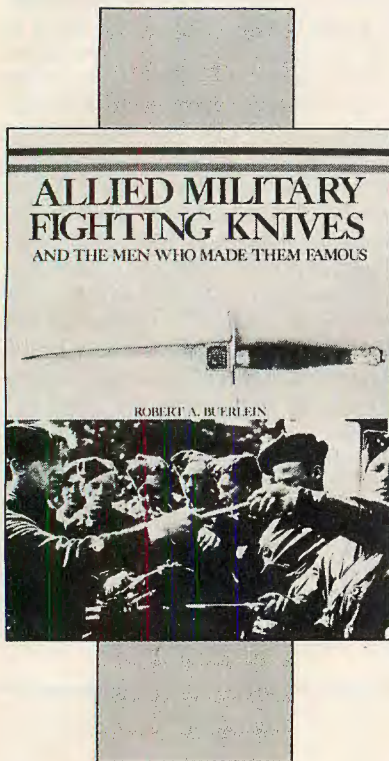
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ALLIED MILITARY FIGHTING KNIVES AND THE MEN WHO MADE THEM FAMOUS. By Robert A. Buerlein. The American Historical Foundation, Dept. SOF, Box 6622, Richmond, VA 23230. \$34.95 hardbound, \$19.95 paperbound. Review by William Guthrie.



BIG wars still need little weapons, and World War II illustrated that principle as well as any conflict. From crossbows to caltrops, simple weapons played their part in the world's biggest war, but WWII doesn't usually bring knives to mind, until you read Buerlein's encyclopedia of combat cutlery.

When knives do intrude on the popular picture of WWII, they usually take the form of the K-BAR, so it's easy to assume that military issue would standardize combat knives. **Allied Military Fighting Knives** shows and tells that wasn't the case. Some 358 knives are represented in photographs and more are discussed in exhaustive detail concerning design, material, manufacture and distribution.

Buerlein's book is made more handleable by functional division of knives into major types, analysis of those types and a discussion of their use and issue. This is an unusual collector's book, because by taking a lively approach to a technical issue, and artistically designing it to be pleasing to the eye, the author and the publisher have made a book which will appeal to many more than the relatively small number who collect fighting knives of WWII.

IN REVIEW



UNITED STATES NAVY IN WORLD WAR II: The One-Volume History, from Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay—by Men Who Fought in the Atlantic and the Pacific and by Distinguished Naval Experts, Authors and Newspapermen. Compiled and edited by S.E. Smith. Quill — William Morrow and Company Inc., Dept. SOF, 105 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016. 1,049 pages, 100 B&W photos with index. \$15.95. Review by John Coleman.

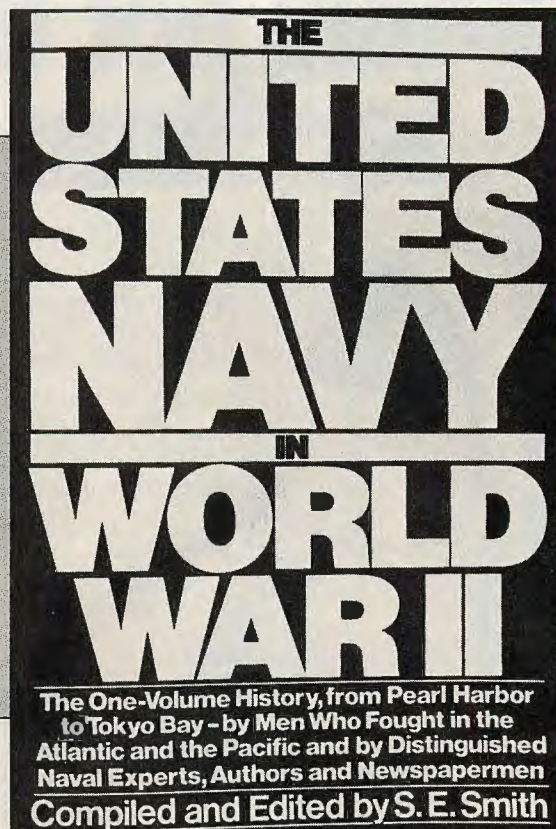
UNITED States Navy In World War II has an ambitious title and an ambitious goal: to tell the history of the Navy in WWII in one relatively short volume. And it succeeds in a far better way than many thicker tomes.

Military history is generally compiled, analyzed and published for two very different types of readers. One school publishes secondary sources for other historians and fills its pages with endless minutiae that faithfully record

a particular battle or operation. Few are readable as informative entertainment, and the lay student of military history gains no real sense of the times.

United States Navy joins the other camp, where the reader vicariously experiences history through the words of men who made and reported it. That's the solid foundation of this book. Editor Stan Smith, a Navy combat veteran of WWII, has compiled extracts, memoirs and personal narratives — primarily first-person accounts — of men who fought their own little corner of the global war. From admirals to ordinary seamen, pilots to submariners, medics and chaplains — all tell their own stories the way they saw it then without benefit (or hindrance) of the "big picture" perspective.

That's really what makes this book stand out from others of its ilk. The first three stories, for example — "Pearl Harbor Attack" by John Toland, "...And Pass the Ammunition" by Lieutenant Commander (Chaplain) Howell Forgy, and "I Can't Keep Throwing Things At Them" by Walter Lord — forcibly put you in Pearl Har-



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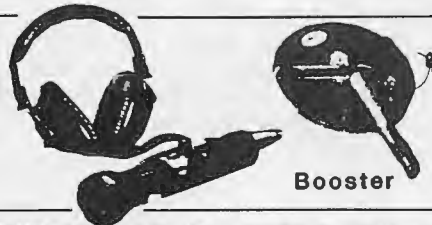
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bor on December 7th and make you live the shock, confusion, fear — and bravery — of men under a surprise attack. They didn't know how the next hour would turn out, much less the war, and that terrible uncertainty grips you from page one.

Smith breaks this book into seven segments, each dealing with its own theater or subtheater of naval operations although the emphasis is, of course, on the war in the Pacific. Major battles — Midway, Coral Sea, Guadalcanal — find their place here, told by the fleet admirals who tried to outguess and outmaneuver a well-trained and numerically superior Japanese opponent. It's an outstanding opportunity to live the crises — and walk the thin line between tactical genius and bad judgment — that command-level decision-makers faced from minute to minute.

But the real story here comes from the ordinary — and a few extraordinary — men who flew the torpedo planes and fighters, manned the bridge of a destroyer or the twin .50s on a PT boat, or sweated out the hours while depth charges hammered their sub. The odds were against their day-to-day survival and they knew it, and their battles in the ocean's trenches evoke an almost frightening empathy.

Smith's book will no doubt be a disappointment to some readers searching for a concise one-volume technical history jammed with facts and figures. **United States Navy** is not designed to be that book. It is an anthology of audacious success tempered with overcautious failure, stark fear and hope, and, most importantly, men at war on the seas.

THE SEYCHELLES AFFAIR. By Colonel Mike Hoare. Bantam Press, London. Mike Hoare, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 4-ED, London W1A-4ED, England. \$29.95 hardbound, plus \$5.00 for airmail from London. Review by William Guthrie.

LEADERS of unsuccessful coups rarely live to tell their tales, so this book will be of unusual interest to SOF readers. It's the story of the most famous modern mercenary's last job.

Through misinformation and disinformation, the Seychelles coup attempt has had a bad reputation across the board, from left to right. Whether the plot was a good one or not, and whether it was well-executed

or not has been argued since a half-hidden Kalashnikov gave the plot away in the Seychelles airport, and the mercenaries had to shoot their way out, leaving several of their own behind.

Hoare has shed little light on the matter up to this point, largely to protect himself and his family. Now, he has decided to take his account of the story to the public, to tell why and how he led the raid ... and what went wrong.

Hoare's exposé of the details of South African complicity in planning and backing the coup attempt is worth the price of the book. Along with Hoare's version of this famous failure is his account of the South African penal system and how he says he was thanked by that government for doing their dirty work.

The verdict isn't in on the plot to restore democracy to the Seychelles, but until the release of this book, the most important testimony was not available.

American publication is still under negotiation, so if you want to read **The Seychelles Affair** this year, buy the Bantam edition. British copies ordered from Hoare will include the author's autograph. ✕

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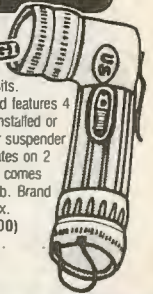
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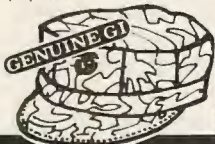
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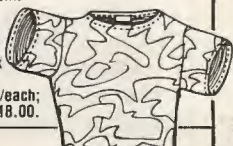
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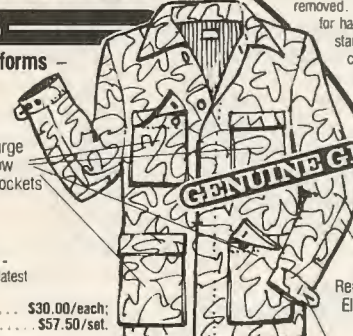
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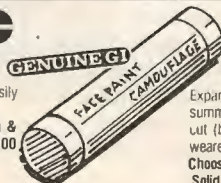
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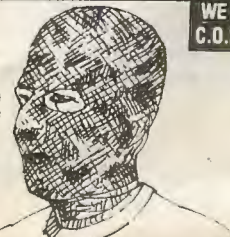
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I WAS THERE

by Dr. Robert V. Russell

Luckless One-Armed Bandit

As a young lieutenant in the British regular army, Dr. Robert V. Russell was assigned to the Royal West African Frontier Force in Nigeria, one of the last outposts of the British Empire. He recalls one of his many adventures in West Africa before Nigeria was granted independence by Great Britain in 1960.

IN bygone days the Royal West African Frontier Force operated in Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast and Nigeria, four countries in British West Africa. It was a fine fighting force with numerous traditions and battle honors, some of the latter gained during the fighting in World War II Burma. The RWAFF was led by British officers and NCOs who were detached from their parent regiments and corps on secondment to serve for a period of three years.

I was posted to the Nigeria Regiment Training Centre based at Zaria, the farthest military post in the north. The barracks consisted of antiquated buildings with walls made of mud two or three feet thick, thatched roofs with pillars, and rounded archways. Amenities were limited. Electric lighting or kerosene lamps, revolving fans and toilet buckets — collected and cleaned during the night by the night-soil merchants — were the hallmarks of comfort. Life consisted of hard soldiering and, as a relief, hunting, trekking and toughening sports. I loved it.

However, we did have a minor problem at the compound: the problem of the "thief-men," roving bands of thieves in northern Nigeria who used cunning, stealth and darkness to attack their targets. They killed and plundered without remorse and used magic, voodoo, or as known in West Africa, *ju-ju*, to their advantage.

Much feared and seldom seen, the thief-men were dangerous shadows in the night. They would insert men into a building occupied by whites or blacks, locate the sleeping residents, gently pull back the mosquito nets and have men standing over the sleepers with knife, large rock, or blunt instrument ready to bludgeon them if they awoke. The men would strip naked and cover

themselves with grease to enable them to slip out of a retainer's hands or squirm through impossibly small openings. If the robbed were lucky they would awaken in the morning to find everything taken. If they awoke before morning, it would be the last time.

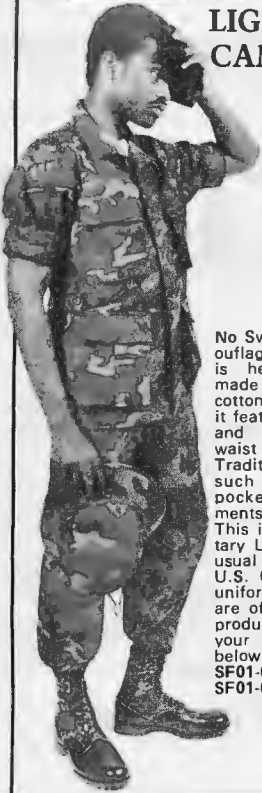
Electronic devices were not available in those days, so all types of guards and patrols were on duty after sundown. But this did not resolve the problem of the thief-men. I had been quartered in a *gidda* (bungalow) located on the periphery of the compound which I shared with another junior officer. Heavy bush and large trees surrounded the area. Gangs of natives toiled ceaselessly to keep the bush under control.

One evening we were playing chess as we awaited officers' mess call. Suddenly and very quietly my companion placed a finger on his lips and pointed over my shoulder into my bedroom. He carried on talking in a normal voice, and turning carefully I could see a large snake reaching through the window toward my bedside table. But there was something strange about its movements; it was attempting to remove my pistol from its holster and web gear. Also, I could see that the bars on the window were bent. (Later we established that the gang had returned nightly to work on the bars, but the sight of the pistol was too tempting.)

I motioned to my partner, adroitly slipped out of my Wellington dress boots and crept along the wall into my room. Luckily, the web gear had become tangled and I could now see a hand and arm covered with snakeskin. Grabbing my kukri — a weapon I opted to carry in preference to a machete — I lunged, grabbed the hand and slashed. Spurring blood, a scream, and I was left holding a severed forearm. Gathering weapons, we rushed outside but it was too dark to follow. In the morning light the blood trail made initial tracking easy but we eventually lost the tracks. The thief-man was eventually caught due to frequent sightings of a one-armed man by informers who no longer feared his *ju-ju*. The new *bomberturi* (white chief)

Continued on page 80

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	M Long	37-41"	71" up
	L Reg.	41-45"	67-71"
L Long	41-45"	71" up	
XL Reg.	45-49"	67-71"	
BDU PANTS	Size	Waist	Inseam
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	M Reg.	31-35"	29 1/2 - 32 1/2"
	M Long	31-35"	32 1/2" & up
	L Reg.	35-39"	29 1/2 - 32 1/2"
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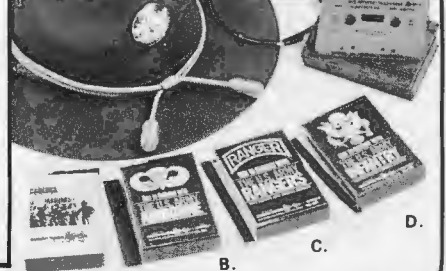


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Safety	Trigger Cross Block	Trigger Cross Block
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Pellet Feed	Gravity, 10 shot	Gravity, 10 shot
Caliber	.68 ins.	.68 ins.

B. PAINT PELLETS. Washes out in cold water with "Spray and Wash" or a similar product. Bright colors of red, blue or yellow.

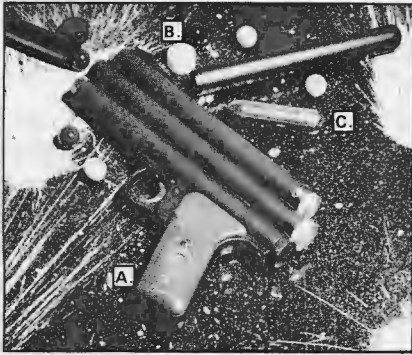
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SOF CONVENTION

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Seminars — SOF's seminars have gained a reputation as being both informative *and* entertaining. As a registered conventioner, you won't want to miss this year's program, including these highlights: (\$15 fee per seminar to non-conventioners)

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Firepower Demo — Ken Hackathorn will orchestrate this exciting event featuring Peter Kokalis' famous machine-gun "Mad Minute" and John Donovan's explosive finale, plus a few new surprises that promise to make the '86 Demo the *best* you've ever seen! (\$10 Demonstration pass to nonconventioners.)

Pugil Stick Tournament — You won't want to miss the fun and excitement at poolside Wednesday through Friday nights when would-be bayonet battlers walk the plank. A \$5 donation entitles anyone to join the fun, and may the best man (lady?) win! (Registered conventioners only.)

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Operation Headhunter — This grueling cross-country obstacle course pits the individual against nature, requiring skills in land navigation, rappelling, climbing and endurance running. If you've got what it takes, write: ALECTO Group, P.O. Box 253, Elkhorn, NE 68022.

Rappelling Classes — For both the beginner and the advanced, Fritz Borchardt is once again offering his basic and tactical courses for those interested in acquiring this important operational skill. For more information, write: Fritz Borchardt, P.O. Box 548, Nederland, CO 80466.

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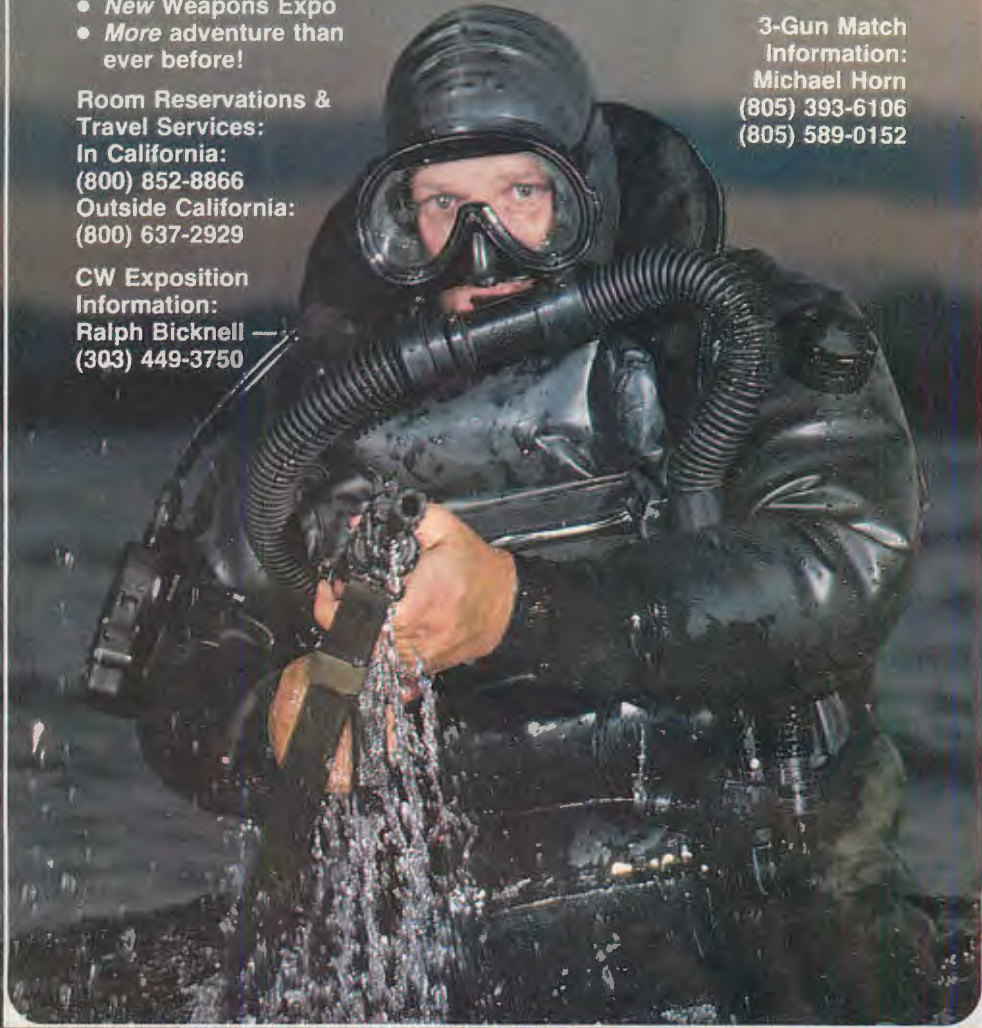
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DW

FROM the brooding mountains of Tonkin to the sweltering Mekong Delta, from the thick jungles of Laos to the sandy coast of Cambodia, a chain of army-run bordellos ensured that the ordeal of enforced abstinence would be short-lived for field and garrison troops. Whatever tactical follies it may have been guilty of, whatever superannuated traditions it may have clung to, the French High Command in Indochina could never have been accused of ignoring the sexual needs of its fighting men.

Girls were quartered in requisitioned hotels in the cities, houses in the towns, huts in the villages, and in tents and bunkers in the field. But the Parc Aux Buffles was the *maison mere*, the mother of them all. The Parc Aux Buffles, a cement-walled complex on the road to Saigon's twin city Cholon, was one of the largest whorehouses in the world run by, and for, the French Expeditionary Force.

The enlisted men's section occupied an interior courtyard the size of a small football field, ringed with small, individual cubicles. The entrance gate was guarded by Foreign Legionnaires armed with sub-machine guns who stood under a sign that warned customers to leave their grenades and weapons at the gate. The packed earth surface of the courtyard was dusty in the dry season and a quagmire during the rains. Milling crowds of soldiers shopping from cubicle to cubicle churned up clouds of dust that hung in the hot air and caked on their sweat-soaked uniforms. During the wet season the girls' legs were spattered with mud and the men had to teeter along wooden boards to traverse the sudden swamp.

The yard was a Tower of Babel. The girls came from Tonkin, Annam and Cochin China, from Cambodia, Laos and the Thai mountain country of North Vietnam. Drunken legionnaires sang in German and Spanish; tough colonial infantrymen tried to haggle over prices while young recruits, newly arrived from France, gawked in disbelief at the spectacle.

Many of the girls bared their best parts. Others wore what they considered seductive attire: a flimsy robe over cheap black lingerie; a thigh-length skirt; tattered net stockings and wooden clogs; a tight Chinese *cheong sam*, zippered from thigh to armpit for quick shedding.

Sombre-faced female monitors, older women in dark trousers and white blouses, moved through the confusion, each responsible for a sector of the establishment. They settled arguments, quieted drunks, saw to it that the cubicles were clean, that beer was available for sale, and called for the military police if things got out of hand.

The officers' section, known as "Mama's," was just around the corner on a side street. It was a long, low, cinderblock addition to the complex with a roof of corrugated tin. Anti-grenade wiring enclosed several wooden tables where drinks were served and the girls waited for customers. A sagging cord of colored lights was looped over the door.

SOF FEATURE

MAKING THE MOST OF R&R

French Recipe for a Piece of the Action

by Howard R. Simpson



Mama was a Vietnamese version of Bloody Mary. Short and chunky, she shuffled among the tables, black-trousered buttocks rolling like fleshy pistons, bantering with her customers, urging cognac or champagne in place of beer and flashing a betel nut stained smile. She kept her girls busy. If they weren't with a customer they were wiping a table, serving a drink or sweeping the floor.

Mama was well aware of her responsibility as the supervisor of the officers' section. She was supposedly dealing with gentlemen; she could charge a high price and her girls were carefully selected. The girls appreciated their special status. They knew that a slump in their performance or neglect of their physical appearance could send them through the small, bolted door that connected the officers' section to the main Parc Aux Buffles or *cirque* as they called it.

Mama ran a tight shop. Fantasy dress was out. The girls wore filmy, white cotton blouses and trousers and little jewelry. Their makeup was relatively subdued. They kept themselves spotlessly clean, pouring water from large earthenware pots over their

heads after each working shift. They rubbed their foreheads with Chinese salve to ward off fever during the rainy season and anointed their limbs with a lotion to deter mosquitoes when it was dry. The fragrance of menthol and citronella kept the more fusty odors of Mama's at bay.

Most of the girls spoke fairly good French and a few were beginning to pick up English phrases. They had reached the "I lak you," and "you no good" level when I first visited Mama's with Benton. Benton was a hard-drinking English photographer, an irascible media veteran of the Far East. He'd made himself immortal during Vice President Nixon's arrival to Saigon visit by throwing his leg over an aircraft embarkation ladder to steady himself while shooting. Unfortunately he was wearing very loose knee shorts and no underwear. While the then vice president was smiling in the foreground, Benton was innocently letting it all hang out in the background. When the footage emerged from the news agency and network darkrooms much of it was found to be unusable.

I had been in Saigon only a short time

when I met Benton. After a year as a staff artist on the *San Francisco Call Bulletin* I had joined the U.S. foreign service as an information officer. I had had visions of returning to Paris but the Cold War was heating up; we weren't doing well in Korea and Washington had decided that the French were fighting the "good fight" in Indochina. French speakers ready for service at a "hardship post" were at a premium. On completion of my training at the Foreign Service Institute I had boarded an Air France Constellation for the long flight to Vietnam and the strange realities of Southeast Asia. As the press officer of the American Legion I quickly met the Saigon-based correspondents. Benton, who had an unfortunate habit of throwing empty wine bottles at lounging Chinese waiters to get their attention, had taken it upon himself to show me the "real" Saigon.

He had explained that Mama's was the best buy . . . quality for money . . . in Saigon. He had convinced Mama that journalists, diplomats and businessmen should be allowed to use her facilities. Many French officers wore civilian clothes during their visits so there was no sharp differentiation. The new arrangement also insured profitable evenings during alerts or the big operations that drained Saigon of military personnel and kept HQ busy sticking colored pins in wall maps.

Mama seemed to have a special place in her heart for Benton but she watched his cognac intake carefully and fed him bowls of steaming *soupe chinoise* laced with hot pimientos when she felt he was approaching his bottle-throwing phase.

Saigon at the time had a unique atmosphere. The "Paris of the Orient" was still a beautiful, vibrant city. Huge plane trees formed a canopy over the Rue Catinat, filtering the hot sun. Despite occasional grenadings the cafe terraces were full at aperitif time. There was a rear war going on in the Mekong Delta and in the North but Saigon itself was comparatively secure. The city traded, played and waited. The colonial life continued with its swimming pools, tennis, and motor-boating on the Saigon river, where dashing *spahi* (Algerian) officers in their white tropical uniforms and stout French officials in baggy sharkskin vied for the attention of stunning *metis* beauties and the graceful daughters of the leading Vietnamese families.

Saigon specialized in intrigue and double-dealing. The operations of free-wheeling French intelligence agents, on what they still considered their own turf, made latter-day CIA excesses look like teenage fun. The hot, flower-scented nights, the beauty of the city, the presence of the war, the grenadings and assassinations, the uncertainty of the future and the French philosophy of living for the present combined to put a high premium on sex. The whole city had a provocative musky odor, the redolence of a bed after a night of lovemaking. The atmosphere, the customers and the girls at Mama's reflected this hothouse environment.



A typical evening would find a group of plainclothes French Sûreté agents sitting with their backs to the wall, sipping chilled Algerian rosé, selecting their girls with great care and eyeing each foreigner with professional interest. Tanned parachute officers with shaven heads, fresh from murderous ambushes near the Chinese border, would spend their money on champagne and stagger off to the rooms with a giggling girl on each arm. Prim staff officers in immaculate white shorts and sport shirts would have a quick drink, watch the proceedings with distaste and leave for the piano bar at the Hotel Majestic. Each Friday evening, with a punctuality that did him credit, a bearded British consul put-putted up to the door on his motorbike, chained it to a nearby stanchion and entered for what he termed his "weekly."

Rarely were there serious fights at Mama's but there could be tension — usually centered on the girls. Customers had their favorites. And when she was monopolized by a newcomer the older hands became impatient. The danger point came late in the evening when the tables were covered with empty bottles. At such times Mama remained on the alert, watching for flash-points, disengaging her girls from certain customers, guiding them to others and masking her not-too-subtle maneuvers by laughing more loudly and filling more glasses.

She was an accomplished actress and her tactics usually worked. If they didn't, she had contingency plans. When insults began to fly she produced a weighted, ebony club and banged it on a table. This was an attention getter. The sight of a round, frowning Mama, pounding on a table while her girls sheltered behind her, provoked hilarity and applause from customers uninvolved in the dispute and usually had a cooling effect on the antagonists. If it didn't, she covered the retreat of her girls to the inner rooms while blowing a shrill whistle to summon the military police.

I learned that Mama had other methods of stifling potential violence. One day Benton returned from a Delta assignment in a very

bad mood. He had seen some children die during a skirmish for control of a village. As we sat down in the Aterbea Restaurant in Saigon his hands were shaking. He drank three *pastis* before dinner and two bottles of turgid Algerian *mascara* with his meal. He topped this lethal mix with a double cognac and rejected my suggestion that he turn in early. He insisted on a visit to Mama's and we drove there in my jeep. His hands were steady now and the brooding silence that had marked our dinner had been replaced with a scatological flow of comment on the war, Saigon and Indochina in general.

Mama greeted us with her usual betel-stained grin, led us to Benton's favorite table and we soon had two glasses of cognac before us. The situation deteriorated rapidly. Benton suddenly decided he must have La Japonnaise, one of the most popular girls at Mamas. But he wasn't the only customer with the same fixation. La Japonnaise was a beautiful young woman, a happy blend of Japanese and Vietnamese parentage. Her body was magnificent, well-proportioned and firm. She had the sultry eyes of a dangerous cat, high cheekbones, a wanton mouth and shiny black hair that fell to the small of her back. She was a tiger in bed with a repertoire of techniques that sent her customers away content and exhausted. She also had the unusual gift of appearing to enjoy her work, a rare asset in the business. Many a customer, civilian and military alike, cushioned their work days with memories of their last encounter with La Japonnaise.

Benton drank half of his cognac in one gulp. He then focused his bloodshot eyes on a table of young French officers who were entertaining La Japonnaise and began to make loud negative comments on France, the French, the French Expeditionary Force and the French High Commissioner. He spoke in English, substituting the word "frog" for French and linking it with an unflattering four-letter word used to describe female genitalia. With the transparent cleverness produced by a pickled liver he pretended to address his comments to me but kept his eyes on the target, eager to detect any reaction to his verbal assault.

He didn't see, however, that his barbs were already having an effect on the table behind us. Four burly, uniformed officers of the Colonial Infantry with enough overseas service to have picked up a smattering of English were now frowning ominously in our direction. One of them had tightened his grip on the neck of a beer bottle. The anchor tattoo on his upper arm was rippling with the movement of his muscular biceps. Fortunately, Mama spotted the danger. She left and quickly returned with two more cognacs. Her arrival interrupted Benton's diatribe. Mama urged him to drink. He did, emptying the glass and banging it down on the table hard enough to splinter its base and cut his finger.

"Balls!" he growled, looking puzzled.

Continued on page 96

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HK BASR

From Firing Line to Front Line

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



BOLT-ACTION rifles have been spitting projectiles downrange for almost one and a half centuries. Invented by Johann Nikolaus von Dreyse of Sömmerda, Prussia, in 1841, the mechanism remains essentially the same today. A rigid handle attached to the bolt is thrust up and pulled rearward to open the breech and then shoved forward and down to close it.

Americans have been enamored with bolt-action rifles ever since the Civil War when the U.S. government purchased 900 under-hammer, oval-bored, bolt-action

H&K's BASR shown with heavy barrel and Bausch & Lomb 6X-24X variable scope in caliber 7.62x51mm NATO.

rifles developed by Lieutenant Colonel J. Durrell Greene in 1857. Even now, surrounded by plastic and sheet-metal marvels that cough lead as fast as the trigger can be jerked, most of us accept without question that bolt guns are inherently more accurate than any semiauto ever will be — no matter who tunes its strings.

Since its inception, Heckler & Koch has

remained at the forefront in small arms design. The G11 assault rifle, firing caseless ammunition and now well into the final stages of development, is proof of H&K's commitment to high technology. Is their recent introduction of the BASR (bolt-action sniper rifle) a mere nostalgic anachronism? Hardly. There remains a healthy demand for rifles possessing an extremely high accuracy potential. Stacking shots into a caliber-sized hole requires precision beyond the capability of the most advanced CNC (Computer Numerical Con-

Heckler & Koch's recent offering is the BASR (bolt-action sniper rifle) available in a variety of calibers and three barrel weights.

trol) machinery. Each and every BASR is custom fabricated by Heckler & Koch to the customer's specifications with a guaranteed accuracy of 1/2 MOA.

Three barrel weights are available: light, standard and heavy. I chose the heavy-barrel model for test and evaluation, hoping it would maximize the system's accuracy potential. This brought the weight, empty, up to 10 pounds. Heavy? Yes, but still in the ball park for law enforcement applications. Equipped with the light barrel, the weight drops to 7 pounds. Barrel length was 24 inches and the rifle's overall length was 42 inches. With six grooves and a right-hand twist of one turn in 12 inches, the competition-quality No. 416 stainless-steel barrel is held to tolerances of 1/10 of .0000 inch in diameter, or 2/10 of .0000 inch in uniformity. The barrel incorporates a flat-faced, recessed target-type competition-crown muzzle. Our specimen's barrel had been left in-the-white with a moderately high polish. That's fine for benchrest shooting, but it's not acceptable for either law enforcement or military purposes. Black oxide, nonglare finishes are now available for stainless steel and this will be necessary before the BASR moves from the firing line to the front line.

This barrel has been mated to a receiver with a tenon (projection) containing 1 1/2 inches of thread for greater barrel stability. The custom action is machined and ground from a prehardened 4140 chrome moly steel billet. Both the large-diameter receiver (1.450 inches compared to 1.360 for the Remington 700) and longer tenon contribute to the action's increased bedding surface. While SOF's test rifle was single-shot only, the BASR is normally supplied with a blind four-round magazine (three-round capacity in magnum calibers). In my opinion, blind magazines do not belong on law enforcement/military sniper rifles. A developmental program to incorporate 20-round H&K G3 detachable box magazines will be completed in the near future. You don't use iron sights on rifles with this potential and none are provided, but the receiver is drilled and tapped for the Weaver No. 35 mount base.

The bolt employs twin cocking cam surfaces which reduce the locking and unlocking effort required. The bolt body has been fluted on single-shot versions only, to reduce weight and increase rigidity. A cone-shaped breech insures positive feeding. A three-position knurled safety lever at the rear of the bolt on the right side can be easily manipulated by the thumb of the shooting hand. Patterned after the Winchester 70

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H&K's heavy-barrel model BASR weighs in at 10 pounds, empty; 7 pounds with the light barrel.



H&K BASR SPECIFICATIONS

Calibers22-250, .22 and 6mm PPC, 7.62x51mm NATO, .30-06 and .300 Winchester Magnum.
Operation	Manually operated turn-bolt. Three-position, Winchester Model 70-type safety.
Feed Mechanism	Single-shot, four-round blind magazine (three-round in magnum calibers) or 20-round G3 detachable staggered box-type magazine.
Weight, empty	7 to 10 pounds, without scope or sling.
Length, overall	42 inches
Barrel	Heavy, standard or lightweight. 7.62x51mm NATO: six grooves with a right-hand twist of one turn in 12 inches. #416 stainless steel. Flat-faced, recessed target-type crown. Competition quality.
Barrel length	24 inches
Stock	Kevlar: high density, urethane foam-filled with Pachmayr recoil pad.
Trigger	Fully adjustable with mechanical lock time of two milliseconds.
Sights	Optical only. Receiver drilled and tapped for Weaver #35 mount base.
Price	\$2,199, complete with hard case and cleaning kit in any caliber or barrel weight; without scope.
Manufacturer	Heckler & Koch Inc., Dept. SOF, 14601 Lee Road, Chantilly, VA 22021.



SUBWAY S

Decoys Dupe New Criminal Breed



THE punk moved through the cars of the train quickly, confidently, but his darting, searching eyes missed nothing. The train was half empty, but he was not looking for a seat. Wearing \$75 running shoes and \$50 jeans, he was neat and clean, his hard-hat polished to a high gloss and his T-shirt freshly scrubbed.

In the next to last car, he slowed slightly. The guy reading the paper had a Nikon in his lap and a camera bag between his feet, but no, he was too big. The only other occupant of this car was the guy in the flowered shirt, his hat on sideways. That one was wired, man. Banging on the wall, snapping his fingers, standing up, sitting down. The punk moved on.

In the last car his mind snapped into high gear. Pay dirt! He had found what he was looking for. Holding down his screaming nerves, he took a seat across from the source of his rapidly racing mind. A "Vic." An easy-on. Middle-class guy, well-dressed, a gold chain around his neck, a gold watch on his wrist, his head lolling against the window behind him as he foolishly slept on the long ride home. This was it.

The punk looked around before he made his move. A homeward-bound matron, her shopping bags at her feet, stared into space a few feet down from the "Vic." A young couple sat a few feet down from the punk,

A robbery waiting to happen. The "sleeping victim" is in fact very much awake, and everybody visible in the car is his back-up crew.

holding hands, in a world of their own on their way downtown for the night. No problem. They wouldn't do anything. The only other occupant of the car was a diddibopper in a do-rag, a joint behind his ear, a ghetto blaster silent on his lap, his mind a thousand miles away, and a cute redhead with her head buried in a newspaper. The punk licked his lips and made his move.

Leaning out across the six feet that separated them, he reached out and quickly, deftly, unsnapped the clasp of the watchband on the sleeping man's wrist, where it dangle across his knee. Their faces less than a yard apart, the punk never took his eyes off the sleeping man's face as he worked. Nothing. Man, this guy was really out of it. The watch slipped down the wrist and stopped. He could not get it over the hand, which swung loosely with the motion of the train. Damn! He tugged it gently, once, twice, and getting increasingly nervous, his nerves at the bursting point at this unforeseen hitch in his plans, he slipped back into his own seat, leaving the watch.

The matron was watching him curiously, but saying nothing. The couple watched

also, silently. The redhead was still reading and the guy in the do-rag was off in never-never land, tapping his fingers to sounds nobody else could hear.

Officer Jeremiah Lyon's head continued to roll gently against the window of the moving train and his mind was racing. Where the hell did he go? The watch was just hanging there, and the temptation was to put it back on. He wanted to open his eyes, but he couldn't. He wanted to jump up and kick the little bastard's ass, but he couldn't. Did the guy have a weapon? He didn't know. He knew nothing. He kept on "sleeping."

Officer James Nuciforo kept snapping his fingers. He thought he might turn the radio on, but changed his mind. He thought he might light the "joint" behind his ear, but tea leaves probably smoked like shit. Either move might have distracted and alerted the punk. He continued watching him with his peripheral vision. There was no robbery until the watch was off the wrist. He sat tight.

Officer Elizabeth Sheridan kept reading her newspaper, keeping both Nuciforo and Lyons in her peripheral vision. Then the punk went back to work.

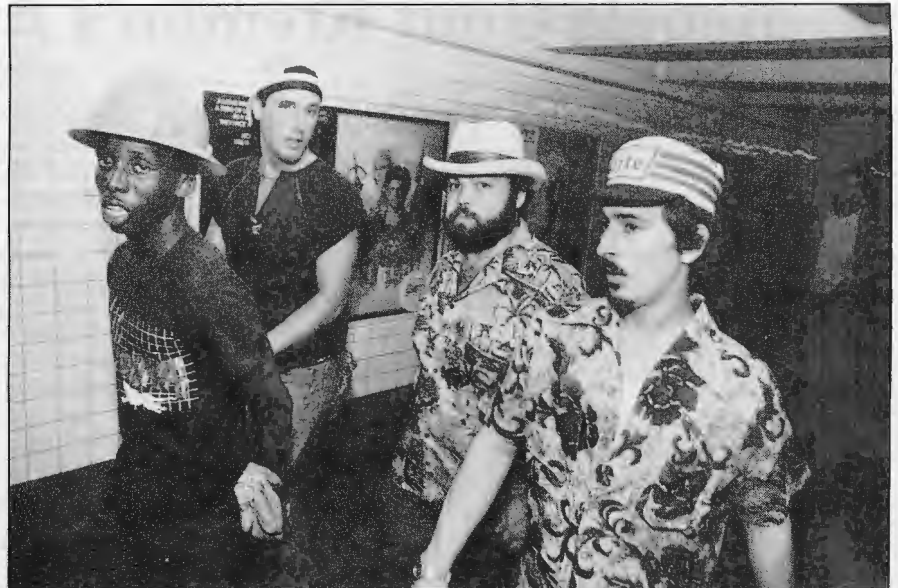
Leaning out again, he pulled and at the same time twisted the bracelet of the watch. Finally, with a slight tug, he got it off the

UBTERFUGE

Text & Photos by Warren D. Jorgensen



Two police officers go through the jewelry they will wear as part of the bait. A back-up team member helps "the Vic" put on his watch.



BUSTED!! Officers of the decoy team take a prisoner down to the station for the booking.

wrist, over the hand, and free. His lungs almost exploded with relief as he sat back down and slipped the watch in his pocket. He leaned back against the seat and closed his eyes. In 30 seconds, they'd be at 42nd street and he'd be off and gone.

Suddenly, a shaft of pain ripped through his throat and he couldn't breathe. His eyes snapped open, wide. And then wider. The guy in the do-rag had him by the throat with his right hand. In his left hand, he held a badge. Leaning close to the punk's face, he almost spit out the required words as he lifted him out of his seat.

"You are under arrest. You have the right to remain silent . . ." His words were lost in the punk's suddenly and rapidly changing world. The "Vic" was standing up, wide awake, a smile on his face a mile wide as he reached over and took the watch back. The redhead was standing, a gun in her hand. The guy in the flower shirt was charging down on him, looking like he was going to eat his eyeballs. The matron was pointing at him yelling over and over, "He did it! He did it! I saw him! I saw him!" The couple was cheering and laughing. And the flash on

the big guy's Nikon was going off again and again and again.

The Decoy Unit of the New York City Police Department had struck again.

The New York City subway system is a world in itself. Dirty, covered with graffiti, hot and sweaty in the summer, cold and damp in the winter, poorly lit and dangerous. The subway is to New York what freeways are to Los Angeles: the arteries through which the lifeblood of the city — its people — flow. All too often, they are the "Vics," or victims of the punks and low-lives that make their livelihoods preying on these people.

The subway system spreads out from Manhattan to all five boroughs, 250 miles of tunnels and rails all negotiable for 90 cents. It is through these tunnels of terror that urban terrorists stalk their victims. This is a new breed, a new generation of criminal. In the main, they are between 15-25, although some are younger, some older. They are all cunning, fast and dangerous. They use the subway for the same reason everybody else does: to get from the outer boroughs to Manhattan, where the action is, where the money is.

This new young criminal will sometimes work alone, but more often than not they work in groups or "crews." In the main, they do not use drugs. Some of them work

out, spending a lot of time keeping in shape. Their careers call for being fast and strong, since you can never tell when you will run into trouble. Witness the crew that approached Bernard Goetz and had their career plans changed unexpectedly in 1984.

They want gold chains around their necks, good shoes, expensive watches, fine clothes. They just don't think they should have to work for them. Under the divine right granted them and closely guarded by the "I'm a Liberal" politicians and journalists of the city, they believe — honestly believe — that they have the right to take what they want.

The police have more than their share of problems with this new type of criminal. Traditional patrolling tactics are only marginally successful against them and it was only after the Goetz incident that nightly police patrols were reinstated, having been abandoned in the late '70s. The difficulty in patrolling is due to the peculiar geography, physical construction of the subways themselves, and the attitudes of the people who ride them. Two examples that I

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OLD FOES, NEW TACTICS

Rebels Rout Kremlin's Afghan Army

Text & Photos by David C. Isby



This soldier for Afghanistan's communist regime is a member of the Tsarnadoy, a successor force to the gendarmerie. Although under Kabul's Ministry of Interior rather than Ministry of Defense, it has at its disposal weapons like heavy machine guns and APCs.

Members of Afghanistan's pro-communist air force pose by a MiG-21, NATO code name Fishbed C. This is similar to the aircraft successfully sabotaged by their crews at Shindand in 1985.



AFGHAN guerrillas are faring better than ever in their independence struggle against the Soviet invaders and their quisling Kabul regime. More military hardware, some of it captured and some supplied by outside aid, is available. Afghan organization — once an apparent oxymoron — today is a stronger coalition, one with definite potential for evolving into an effective, centralized leadership structure.

During 1985, the freedom fighters proved their ability to make the Kremlin pay a high cost for communist adventurism in Afghanistan. The freedom fighters have strengthened their hold in many areas, especially on the eastern border and the Panjsher (see map, pg. 51). Despite concerted Soviet efforts to depopulate key strategic areas, such as the now-devastated border areas of the Helmand Valley and in Laghman and Logar, the guerrillas continue to operate effectively in these free-fire zones.

On a recent trip to meet with Afghan resistance leaders, they showed me some of the new military hardware their men had recovered from battlefields inside Afghanistan. My friends at the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan of Pir Sayed Ahmed Gailani — one of the seven Peshawar-based groups — proudly showed me the latest additions to their arsenals.

One important acquisition consisted of several new ZPU-1 14.5mm heavy machine guns, the oiled gun metal still a shiny olive drab. The Afghans were impressed with them as much for their physical appearance as their firepower. After depending on the smaller, well-used 12.7mm *Dashikas* (DShK-M38) for so long, the ZPU-1s — known to the Afghans as *Ziquriats* — seemed like a luxury.

The *Ziquriat's* 14.5mm round will perforate anything short of a main battle tank. (An acquaintance who served as an adviser to an ARVN cavalry unit said his M41 Walker Bulldog tank was punctured by a ZPU-1 round.) Armor-piercing incendiary (API) ammunition fired from the ZPU-1 makes several areas of the heavily armored Mi-24 Hind helicopter vulnerable.

Unfortunately, API and tracer rounds remain in scarce supply to the Afghan freedom fighters, who have to make do with ball ammunition.

Despite this ammo shortage, the *Ziquriats* I inspected would soon be put to the test against Hinds and other Soviet aircraft. Crews already had been assigned to deploy with these weapons on a specific anti-aircraft ambush mission. They spelled out the details for me, hoping to lure a reconnaissance helicopter into overlapping fields of fire. It sounded workable. But I never heard if they succeeded.

The ZPU is a joy to fire, easily knocking large rocks off a hillside up to a mile away. Like a .50-caliber, the gunner can be confident that if a target is hit, it will stay down.

Still, despite its advantages over the more prevalent 12.7mm HMG, the ZPU-1 is only a stand-in for what Afghan patriots really need: the SA-7, a shoulder-fired, heat-seeking, surface-to-air missile. Although in very short supply, greater numbers of SA-7s were available to the Afghan resistance in 1985 than ever before. And more of these are the improved version, the SA-7B. Several

shipments of the earlier model SA-7, which apparently were PLO surplus and had an expired shelf life, had a 100 percent failure rate, which can be deadly when one is eyeball to eyeball with a Hind gunship. The newer missiles also are more effective against Soviet aircraft using such countermeasures as decoy flares.

Other weapons also have increased the number of victories by the Afghan resistance. The 107mm rocket launcher, both multiple and single tube versions, are now more common in mujahideen ranks.

One need not look far to see the results of this new hardware. Ahmad Shah Massoud's forces in the Panjsher Valley remain the most effective guerrilla fighting force. The Panjshenis were capable of the most effective military action, cutting the Salang Pass highway several times. The Pechgour was taken in one of the best guerrilla offensive operations of the war.

Freedom fighters usually have free range in much of Kandahar and Herat. But since the Soviet invasion of 1979, Afghan patriots

have been unable to capture a provincial capital, or a brigade or division headquarters of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, as the Soviets' puppet government in Kabul is known. This is inconsequential, however, because control of the areas around border outposts has gained increasing strategic importance.

Battles for the Border

In 1985, border campaigns included the two Kunar Valley offensives, both aimed at relieving Barikot; three Paktia offensives, two of which involved Soviet troops which rarely operate in that province; and two offensives in the area between Herat and the Iranian border.

The border fighting has increased pressure on Pakistan. The Soviets increasingly operate along (and sometimes across) the border, hoping to interdict mujahideen troop movements and resupply trains. Some Soviet missions were necessary to relieve outposts besieged by the resistance. Villages and caravanserais, wells and irrigation canals; everything possible was destroyed by the invaders. The rest was mined.

A MAN, NOT A SHEEP

In February 1985, I met with Shafioullah, one of Afghanistan's more renowned resistance leaders. He was visiting friends and relatives in a border refugee camp before returning to his AO, the Koh-i-Safi (Safi mountain) area north of Kabul, near Bagram airfield.

Shafioullah barely mentioned it, but at the time he was planning to celebrate Afghanistan's national day — 21 March — with a 107mm rocket attack on Bagram. I wished him good luck and good hunting. He had the latter.

After saying their prayers and deploying his men for the night op, Shafioullah ordered the attack. Their 107mm rockets zoomed into the compound to hit the best targets. Several Soviet aircraft on the flight line were destroyed. Shafioullah and his men melted into the surrounding hills, jubilant over the costly damage they had inflicted.

The next day, on 22 March, two battalions of Soviet paratroopers flew into the Koh-i-Safi in Mi-8 helicopters. Pouring out of the Hips, the Soviet troops quickly surrounded the entire area and began closing in. Surprised by the swiftness of the Soviet move, Shafioullah and his men, together with other Afghans, managed to fight their way out of the tightening circle. But they sustained severe losses and had to abandon most of their heavy weapons.

Undaunted by this narrow escape, the brave Shafioullah returned to the Koh-i-Safi. His hunting here had been good, but his luck finally ran out. A month after avoiding capture and certain execution, Shafioullah died in a Soviet artillery barrage on the area.

I suppose I was the last Westerner to speak with Shafioullah. An unassuming Pathan, a *Maulavi* (religious teacher) turned guerrilla, he explained why he was going home to fight.

As if teaching young students in a village school, Shafioullah said it was "God's will that you be created a man, not a sheep. A sheep will accept whatever fate is ordained. A man will not. If you do not act like a man and fight for your home and way of life, you have acted as a sheep. You have not only failed your family and your country, you have failed God. You have not done what God made you to do."

Shafioullah did not have to leave the refugee camp. Nor did he have to return to his homeland and fight. The communists in Afghanistan have rolled out the proverbial red carpet for the relatively few guerrilla leaders who have renounced the liberty struggle to join the puppet regime. They are rewarded for such selfish weakness. They get free houses and Toyotas. They do not even have to join the Communist Party. No more dodging land mines and helicopter gunships. Shafioullah could have taken the easy, comfortable way out by simply walking to the nearest government military outpost and saying he was tired of fighting and would no longer resist.



Shafioullah, posing for the author during his last interview with the Western media, a month or so before his death.

Like the airline coupon then in my own pocket, Shafioullah and every other freedom fighter in Afghanistan has a free ticket out of the war, whether it's a walk to a refugee camp or a renunciation of homeland and liberty. After six years of bloody war, not taking that walk is a brave act in itself.

But the deep religious belief of the Afghans compels more of them to fight than could any number of draft boards. Communist guerrillas may have revolutionary zeal to motivate them — no one knows better than the communists how to turn men hungry for liberty and food into what Lenin termed "useful idiots." But Marxists have the added advantage of fortifying this motivation with a commissar holding a Tokarev pistol at their backs.

The Afghan patriots are not motivated by fear. The "sheep" who have cowered under the Soviet invaders to prop up the illegitimate regime in Kabul demonstrate the wretched lot of the fearful, the gutless, the traitors. And brave holy warriors like Shafioullah set the example for heroes of future generations of freedom fighters, those who will shun the easy road for a more difficult and noble task. To live like a man. And to die like one.



Although border forays by Spetsnaz troops met with some success, Soviet commanders want to avoid a permanent ground presence in that area. They therefore are coupling the use of special operations troops with mining and the deployment of such air assets as the Hind to cut guerrilla supply routes. This air anti-infiltration campaign is on the U.S. model. This is especially true in southeastern Afghanistan.

The siege of communist forts in the eastern border area has been on and off since 1979. Many of the old, Foreign Legion-style border forts have been abandoned, but larger installations have remained.

Ironically, these larger forts serve strategic advantages for both sides. For the Soviets, they absorb rebel firepower that otherwise might be used against more critical targets deeper inside Afghanistan. They also remain visible reminders of the communist presence.

But because of their proximity to the Pakistan border, logistics are simplified. The freedom fighters can attack these forts in greater numbers and with heavier weapons, sometimes including captured tanks and artillery. Not only is the remaining population in the border area strongly pro-resistance, but part-time fighting men from nearby refugee camps who are unfit for deep-penetration missions can take part. And the Peshawar-based leadership can be more directly involved.

In early 1985, the reluctance of the Soviets to commit many Soviet ground forces to the area on a permanent basis gave way to a realization that the more-or-less permanent siege of com-

munist garrisons by freedom fighters was making these outposts more of a far-flung liability than a strategic asset. Two border forts began showing up on situation maps in Kabul and Moscow circled in red grease pencil: Barikot, in the Kunar Valley of Nangrahar Province, and Khost, in Paktia Province.

These outposts usually are garrisoned by the communist Afghan troops of Kabul's puppet regime, under the direct command of Soviet "advisers." But the increasing strength of the guerrillas around these two forts showed the Soviets that more of their own troops were needed.

In January 1985, a regiment of the 104th Guards Airborne Division flew from its base at Kirovabad in the Soviet Union into Afghanistan, deploying in Paktia Province. Operating with the tribal militia — Pathan tribes bought off by the communists — the paratroopers had two goals: one, to clear out guerrilla strongholds within striking range of Khost, and two, to cut guerrilla supply routes that run through Paktia into the interior.

As a result, more freedom fighter convoys were ambushed, more arms caches located and destroyed, trails mined, and crucial wells filled or poisoned. Unlike the road-bound columns of Kabul regime regulars, guerrillas found the Soviet airborne troops and their mercenary militia to be highly lethal adversaries, quite adept at covering ground quickly in the difficult mountain terrain. Mission accomplished, the Soviet paratroopers were searched by officers for contraband such as hashish and returned to Kirovabad.



With thoughts of Soviet invaders in their sights, Afghan freedom fighters gather to test fire a new 14.5mm Ziuriat, a Chinese-built Type 75 heavy machine gun that is a copy of the Soviet ZPU-1.

Relieving pressure on the fort at Barikot was a tougher nut to crack for the Soviets and their Afghan lackeys. Elements of two communist government Afghan infantry divisions, reinforced by several thousand Soviet troops — heliborne light forces and mechanized combined arms units — tried to push up the Kunar Valley. They met fierce guerrilla resistance. No one broke through to Barikot. After three weeks of bloody fighting, Moscow's offensive failed.

This setback sharpened the Kremlin realization that more Soviet troops were needed in the border area on a more regular basis. Without such a commitment, guerrilla sieges at Khost and Barikot could not be prevented, nor would the flow of patriot arms into interior regions be stopped.

Patriot spies soon began to see signs of another communist offensive. In motor pools at Kabul and Jalalabad, Soviet troopers worked feverishly to repair vehicles. Fat An-12 Cub transports droned into Kabul Airport, spiraling down on a steep final approach. The evasive maneuver, used to avoid possible SA-7 fire, is familiar to those who flew into Tan Son Nhut during the Vietnam War.

As Soviet units began leaving their garrisons for short, inten-

sive field training exercises, the signs were clear. A Soviet push was coming. Long before the columns of drab green armored vehicles started to roll up the road to Barikot, the guerrillas knew their destination.

The Soviet thrust into the Kunar Valley did not show much originality. But then the rugged terrain did not provide many options. There is only one road to Barikot. The Soviet column pushed onward, past the charred hulk of vehicles burned out in the earlier offensive. Helicopter-inserted troops secured the high ground ahead of the column. Hind gunships, fighter-bombers, howitzers and multiple rocket launchers laid down suppressing fire on potential trouble spots.

Anticipating this type of counterinsurgency operation, the Afghan resistance abandoned their classic hit-and-run guerrilla tactics for an option the Soviets least expected. The freedom fighters, reinforced with many more troops and weapons than the Soviet G-2 imagined possible, stood and fought. The high ground held by the Afghan rebels could be taken only one way, by infantry assault.

The Soviet offensive finally inched its way into Barikot. But after reinforcing the garrison, there was little to do but turn around and fight their way back out of the valley. The Kremlin's costs were dear, the gains meager.

The second offensive in Paktia Province was planned to follow the same pattern. This time, however, Soviet planners did not delude themselves into thinking they had any element of surprise. The Paktia offensive followed the same basic pattern as the second Kunar offensive. The Afghans, as in the Kunar, stood and fought. Losses were heavy on both sides. But this time the freedom fighters prevented their enemy from reaching his objective. Khost would see no substantial relief in 1985.

There was some slight consolation for the Soviets. They managed a third Paktia offensive in September-October. Mounted solely by DRA militia and regulars, with only Soviet advisers and



Two faces of the resistance. The freedom fighter on the left wears an embroidered cap around which cloth is wound to form a turban. Unlike U.S. infantry units, which may contain citizens from across the country, the nature of this guerrilla war is such that unit members, if not related to each other by blood or marriage, are from the same village.

Soviet identity books such as this one no longer are carried by Soviet troops going into the field in Afghanistan.





helicopters, they launched a surprise strike on guerrilla positions. Many freedom fighters were killed and wounded. But the communists were unable or unwilling to seize additional ground.

The War in the Western Provinces

The area between Herat and the Iranian border was the target of major Soviet offensives twice in 1985. As in the east, these were aimed at cutting guerrilla supply lines. Reflecting the warmer relations between Iran and the Soviet Union, the Afghan resistance has seen its meager aid from the Khomeini regime disappear. Afghans and Iranians are not traditional allies anyway.

So supply routes around Herat are less critical to the Afghan independence movement. The success of freedom fighters can be attributed in large part to the leadership of Ismael Khan, a skillful organizer with a strong personality. Ismael was an Afghan army major until the brutal government suppression of Herat citizens — the first major action of the Afghanistan War — pushed him to join his homefolk in the anti-communist uprising of March 1979. Like his fellow *Jamiat* party commander, Ahmad Shah Massoud, Ismael has survived repeated Soviet offensives. He and his forces have apparently survived those in 1985 as well.

Shindand — A Blow for Freedom

Unexploded Soviet bombs are strewn across the landscape of eastern Afghanistan, as any recent visitor to that area will attest. The dud rate exceeds 20 percent, according to some resistance estimates. The poor quality control endemic to Soviet industry may be one explanation. But there are more deliberate reasons.

According to freedom fighters who flew for the communist government in Kabul before joining the resistance movement, some pilots still flying for the Soviet puppet regime are reluctant to drop bombs on their brethren. Although each government aircraft taking off usually has at least one Soviet adviser aboard, if he is not paying close attention Afghan pilots will drop bombs unarmed. Many Afghan government pilots — secretly sympathetic to the struggle for liberty — have stayed with the air force, realizing that if they leave to join the resistance, the Soviets would replace them with Afghans who have no qualms about bombing their own people.

This courageous ruse unfortunately has not escaped notice by the Soviets. Shindand is Afghanistan's largest airbase and home of the Soviet 10th Army. It also houses Soviet electronic and intelligence facilities, as well as operations centers for the Aviation Front of the Neareastern Area of Operations (TVD). Located in southwestern Afghanistan, Afghan members of a fighter-bomber wing at Shindand suffered a brutal Soviet purge in early 1985. Yet some mujahideen survived, more determined than ever to

Despite the acquisition of more advanced weapons, the Afghan resistance continues to use some antiquated models. The .303 Vickers medium machine gun in this photo, however, is used only for training purposes.

avenge the bloody oppression.

Their opportunity came on the night of 22 June 1985. Typical of old-fashioned racial prejudice and paranoia by Soviet communists, their flight line was strictly off limits to their Afghan counterparts. So Afghan pilots decided to sabotage their own aircraft, at least according to some reports (see SOF, February 1986, Bulletin Board, "Afghans Pull Inside Job").

No matter who was responsible, bomb fuzes were spiked and explosives put into fuel tanks. The final result was 12 or 15 MiG-21 Fishbeds and MiG-17 Frescos blasted into small shards of aluminum. There was another round of summary executions afterward, including three Afghan pilots, a co-pilot and a doctor. No one, probably including the Soviets, is sure if these were the real culprits. In the communist way of thinking, though, it matters less whom is shot, so long as someone is punished.

Soviets Improve Weapons and Tactics

When assessing the situation in Afghanistan, a crucial question arises for analysts on both tactical and strategic levels: "Just how good is the Soviet army?" Theories range from very good to very bad. Afghanistan has yet to provide definitive answers.

One factor common to all modern armies is a ponderous bureaucratic machinery. As such, armies tend to learn slowly and forget quickly. Examples that come quickly to mind were the British in Malaya, the French in Indochina and the United States in Vietnam. In each instance, the army suffered through a long and painful period to learn effective anti-guerrilla warfare tactics.

One one hand, since their 1979 invasion of Afghanistan the Soviets have continued some military methods that seem inexplicable, if not plain stupid. But one hears fewer and fewer accounts of Hind gunship formations bypassing easy targets of opportunity to strike mission-designated points which were deserted by freedom fighters who knew an air attack was on the way.

On the other hand, the Soviets demonstrated tactical improvements and increased their tempo of operations in 1985. Some estimates indicate that while Soviet-manned units in Afghanistan previously spent only 25 percent of their time in the field, this increased to 90 percent last year.

Soviet tactical improvements included the increased use of special operations forces and tactics in 1985. The use of long-range artillery and fixed-wing aircraft to destroy villages and

resistance movement infrastructure has been expanded. Weapons such as FROG-7s, 240mm mortars, 220mm multiple rocket launchers and 152mm SP howitzers are now in combat use.

Despite a greater SA-7 threat, Soviet helicopters apparently became more effective. No longer are targets of opportunity overlooked, a change which may have contributed to the death of Charles Thornton, a U.S. journalist killed when the rebel convoy with which he was traveling came under attack by Hinds.

Fixed-wing tactics also became more effective. More Frogfoots (Sukhoi Su-25) appeared. These widely feared ground-attack aircraft are similar to the U.S. Air Force's A-10 Thunderbolt II. They have seen action as far east as Paktia.

The armed forces of the Kabul regime did not suffer the large-scale collapse some hoped for and expected. Yet the DRA regulars did not prove much more effective than they had in previous years. This was confirmed by defeats of the 444th Commando Brigade in Panjsher IX and elements of the 9th and 11th divisions in the first Kunar Valley offensive.

Two substantial defections, the sabotage of the MiGs at Shindand, and the events in the Panjsher and around Herat, showed that DRA military personnel still are vulnerable to sympathies for the independence movement. Improved militia ability — the Khost militia proved loyal to Kabul throughout the Paktia fighting — was seen in the 1985 fighting. Improved KHAD secret police intelligence gathering made Soviet interdiction efforts more effective.

The Kabul regime made great political efforts to foster an air of legitimacy. Those efforts did little to cut through the stench of domination by Moscow. An ostensibly noncommunist "National Fatherland Front" was formed, supposedly to provide a banner under which Afghans could support in good conscience both the Soviet Union and their own country. It was widely received as the paper tiger that it obviously is. A *Loya Jirga* (national assembly) was called. That did not help much either. Its only accomplishment was the defection of one guerrilla, that of Ismatullah Achakzai. This created local problems for guerrillas in the southeast, as he was able to interdict major supply routes and was aware of many guerrilla post locations.

Guerrilla Organization

In 1985, guerrilla morale remained surprisingly high, more so in the field than in Peshawar. Ironically, the Afghans have done better in coming to grips with the Soviet army than they have in bringing around their own political leadership to the realities of modern guerrilla war. Their own politicians remain the force most destructive to aspirations for Afghan independence. High-level political errors can doom the bravest and most skillful fighting men in the field.

Afghan freedom fighters have changed politically. The emergence of the coalition of the seven major political parties in Peshawar during 1985 has the potential for a cohesive guerrilla

Troops of Afghanistan's puppet government prepare to fire 82mm rounds at fellow Afghans from a communist mortar position.



Two Afghan resistance recruits receive training from a veteran freedom fighter in the use of the M-1937 82mm mortar. The 82mm mortar has been the standard long-range infantry support weapon against communist troops, but its limited range is a liability. It is gradually being supplemented with the 107mm rocket launcher.

leadership organization, something they have lacked. Yet the absence of a command, control and communication system still limits implementation of any decisions. Cooperation and unified battlefield action has become more common, as the border fighting showed. On the other hand, even the best regional commanders, aside from Massoud, have difficulties organizing regionwide combined action.

There is no intrinsic reason that communist guerrilla movements should be better organized than their anti-communist counterparts, although the communists do have some advantages. They have an ironclad goal in attainment of a Marxist-Leninist regime. There is no need to listen to any contrary opinions unless these prove advantageous to them for the moment.

The Afghans, however, come from a tradition that values pluralism and individuality. Political killing generally is considered by them as murder, rather than as an act of revolutionary discipline. The great challenge to the Afghans is to become as effective in their organizational aspects as some communist guerrillas have been without becoming as rigidly dogmatic.

But honed by extensive combat experience, Afghanistan's freedom fighters are a much sharper fighting force now than they were in 1979-80. Complementing their increased skills is their greater firepower, especially in the east.

Perhaps making more of an impact than the ZPU-1s I saw is the wider use of 107mm rockets, used in attacks on targets in the Kabul area. They were also extensively used in the border fighting, where they gave the guerrillas effective long-range weapons for the first time. This has enabled the guerrillas to use more conventional stand-and-fight tactics such as those seen in the Kunar Valley and Paktia offensives of 1985.

Typical of their individuality, some Afghan freedom fighters have expressed doubts about the ultimate wisdom of conven-

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CAPTURED IN AFGHANISTAN

SOF Analyzes New Soviet Weapon

by David C. Isby

Photos by John Crawford

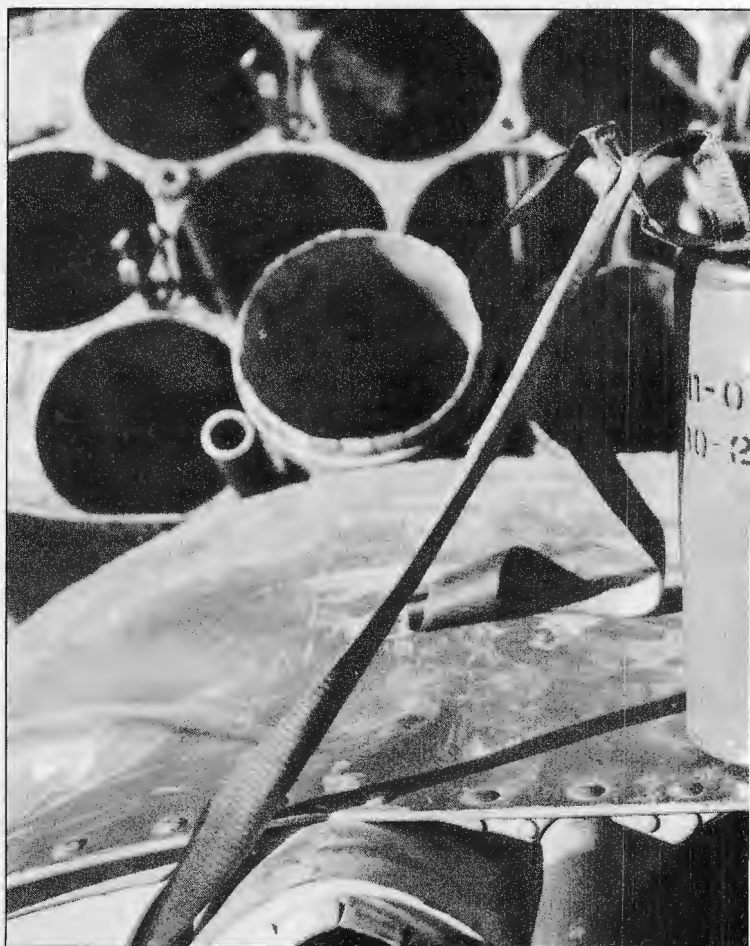
THE war in Afghanistan has brought to light Soviet weapons and equipment that otherwise might have remained unknown in the West. From the war's beginning in 1979, *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine has led the way in locating, removing and publicizing information on a wide variety of Soviet weapons and ammo: the PFM-1 land mine, the 5.45x39mm round, the NBC (nuclear-biological-chemical) filters of the BMP-1 infantry fighting vehicle, the PFM-50 claymore mine, the AKR 5.45mm short-barreled assault rifle, the 7.62mm silencer and many more.

We are proud to have found another new intelligence nugget to share with the readers of *Soldier of Fortune*. The PKPE-1 — a multiple grenade launching weapon — is being shown in accompanying photos for the first time in any open-source publication.

The PKPE-1 consists of two units, each with 29 launchers deployed in three ranks. It is, in this way, reminiscent of a Soviet-style multiple rocket launcher. The projectile is fired differently, however. Instead of being propelled from the launching platform by a rocket, projectiles are powered from each of the 29 launchers on each unit by a spring. Every unit contains two or three grenades. These apparently are high-explosive fragmentation-type weapons, stabilized by fins and streamers. Knowing Soviet practice, however, it is likely that a high-explosive anti-tank (HEAT) shaped-charge version is also available, for top attack against enemy armor.

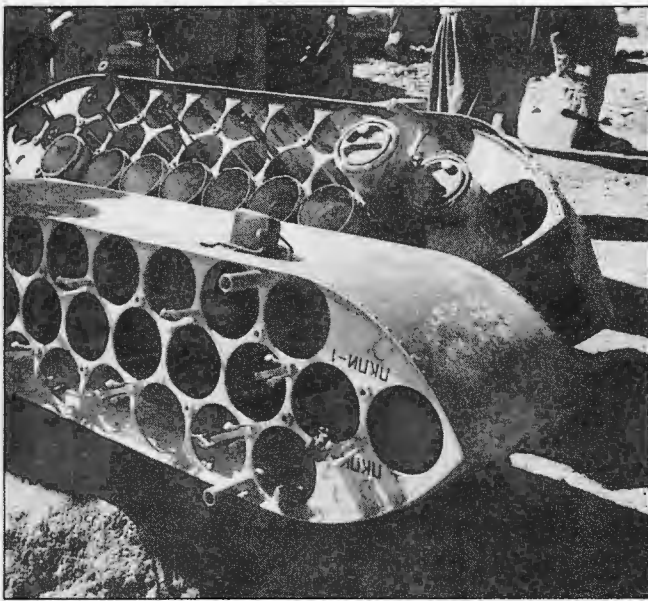
The grenades are packed in canisters, one designating it a P-06S. Each canister could accommodate three grenades, although there were only two in the ones in the photograph. The projectile appears to be about a 73mm weapon. Without propellant, weight would be relatively light, probably about 1.5 kilograms, of which 20-30 percent would be the explosive charge. This would yield a maximum lethal radius of about 10 meters.

The PKPE-1 has all the marks of an airborne weapons system, probably for use on helicopters. Its aerodynamic shape and mounting with coaxial cables is characteristic of aircraft weapons. It apparently is intended to fire its spring-loaded grenades broadside, out to each side of the aircraft's flight path. The PKPE-1 has no traverse mechanism, but is mounted with a sequence firing device. The weapon itself apparently is to be fixed in place on an aircraft. The PKPE-1 also is made out of aluminum. This is logical for an aircraft weapon, but increases vulnerability. This can be seen in the photographs, where one of the grenade-filled canisters has apparently been hit and exploded, detonating its neighbors. A ground mount would probably use steel. Thus, the PKPE-1 appears to be a Soviet-made helicopter version of the Franco-German MW-1 multipurpose aircraft weapons system.

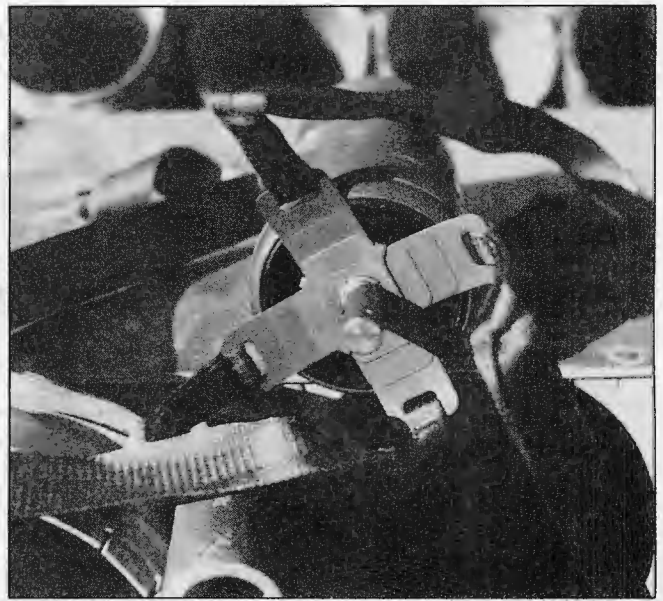


With aerodynamic shape and mounting, the PKPE-1 has all the marks of an airborne weapons system and probably was patterned after the Franco-German MW-1 multipurpose aircraft weapon.

The MW-1 is one of NATO's latest ground attack weapons. Employed primarily on Tornado attack aircraft of the *Luftwaffe*, the MW-1 also fires submunitions — stabilized by fins or parachutes — out broadside from the aircraft's flight path. A single Tornado in a single pass can use the submunitions fired out from



Reminiscent of a Soviet-style multiple rocket launcher, but fired quite differently, the PKPE-1 consists of two units containing 29 launchers propelled by springs.



Each of the 29 units contains a canister with two, possibly three, high-explosive fragmentation-type grenades stabilized by fins and streamers.



the MW-1's launch tubes to cover an area 200-500 meters wide and 200-2,500 meters long. The MW-1, like the PKPE-1, is composed of units on both sides of the aircraft. There are differences. The MW-1 has two 28-launcher units facing each way, mounted on the Tornado's belly. The MW-1 also uses explosive charges rather than springs to fire out the projectile. The MW-1 makes use of NATO's superior miniaturization technology — each launch tube can hold up to 42 bomblets.

An Mi-8 Hip Soviet tactical lift helicopter could easily carry two

PKPE-1 units on its weapons pylons or the two units could be mounted, back to back, under the belly of Soviet fighter-bombers such as the Su-25 Frogfoot. While it is not likely to have the coverage of the MW-1, it could still cover a large area. Using the HE-frag grenades, PKPE-1 equipped Hips could help suppress air defenses around landing zones, supplementing the pods of 57mm S-5 rockets usually used for this task. A Frogfoot flying over a truck convoy firing off HE-frag grenades or an armored column using HEAT grenades has the potential to inflict substantial losses. Attacking armored vehicles from the top has become more significant as the use of combined armor has made other methods potentially less successful.

Yet this is all theory. The fact is that the PKPE-1 in these photographs did not come from a shot-down helicopter at all. Rather they were mounted on a Soviet BMP-1 infantry fighting vehicle that was knocked out in the Jadjji area of Paktia Province during the Soviet fall offensive in 1985. The BMP was one of a group of four vehicles, possibly acting as rearguard for a larger column.

The PKPE-1 mounting on the BMP-1, however, bore all the marks of a field improvisation. It was mounted on top of the rear hatches, meaning that the BMP could not be used to carry a rifle squad while it was attached. The limited range of a spring-fired system is more of a factor when it is not fired from an aircraft. Streamer-stabilized projectiles also make less sense for a ground-fired weapon.

Nevertheless, similar weapons have been used in a number of different armies. In Vietnam, the Americans fitted claymore mines as anti-ambush weapons to a number of different types of armored vehicles. The Israelis currently mount claymores on the fenders of the modified Centurion tanks that are used as APCs in the Northern Command area. Before the troops pile out, the crew fires off the claymores. This certainly discourages anyone lurking nearby who might have entertained the idea of having a shot at the troops. The Rhodesians improvised a wide range of counterambush munitions. While the BMP-1 armed with the PKPE-1 would have to take care not to catch nearby trucks in its blast area, it could still be an effective system. It would certainly not be the first field improvisation that the Soviets have tried in Afghanistan.

Whatever its true role, the PKPE-1 is not extensively used in Afghanistan and this might be a service test version. There are few Afghan or journalist reports that mention a weapon such as this. So it will be a while, if at all, before every Mi-8 Hip starts dispensing spring-launched grenades. ✎

AFGHAN ATTACK

Behind the Lines in Kandahar

Text & Photos by Jake Border



Deadly electric burps of miniguns cut the night air, and from a hole in the sky came bursts of scarlet tracer. Like mechanical dragons two Soviet Mi-24 Hind helicopter gunships spat fire at the ground below.

Tracers came on rapidly at first, then arced slightly until they appeared to float in the air like gossamer. But I wasn't fooled by the light show. I'd seen that years ago in Cambodia, though it was our side dishing it out then.

Just as we were hustled inside a large mud-brick building the ground shook from a barrage of surface-to-surface rockets — *tourgande* the mujahideen called them, four-meter-long mothers — that erupted geysers of smoke and debris into the night sky and loosened the dust from the roof.

Nobody was much alarmed, this was just the daily random bombardment — intermittent yet persistent — and soon tea, that great sustainer of Afghan campaigns, was served. It was 2000 hours in Afghanistan and I had just arrived at a mujahideen camp on the outskirts of the city of Kandahar, 11 days after leaving a base camp in Pakistan.

A few months earlier I had been with Commander Ahmad-

Firing during an attack. Author notes that personal weapons provide more of a sense of participation in the jihad rather than effecting any damage to the enemy.

shah Massoud in the Panjsher Valley, and I had wondered how the war in the mountains compared with that at the urban level. I chose Kandahar as my target and set out for the nearest staging post, Quetta, capital of the Pakistan province of Baluchistan and headquarters of the mujahideen who operate in southern Afghanistan.

Getting across the border wasn't easy. Even armed with a letter of introduction from Jamiat-i-Islami headquarters in Peshawar I had big hassles trying to organize the trip. It seemed that Jamiat leader Amir Aubaidullah — in charge of nine southern Afghan provinces — was under pressure from the Pakistani authorities not to permit foreigners inside Afghanistan following the recent capture by the Soviets of French journalist Jacques Abuchar near the Afghan border town of Spin Buldak. And naturally, he was concerned for my safety, too.

There was a further problem of providing an escort, for although Aubaidullah controls the purse strings of the party, political unity is loose and still based on tribal affinity. Aubaidullah has a number of lesser amirs under him who in turn control the fighting units of mujahideen. Each of these amirs might have three or four *jebha* (camps) inside Afghanistan under the command of men who owe allegiance to him and not to Jamiat directly. Eventually I met Amir Jalaluddin who ran four *jebha*, and he got the show on the road.

I had spent 18 days in Quetta and was now on my way to the Pakistan border town of Chaman. "Enjoy Afghanistan after 88 km" read an old tourist sign on the road at one point, but I wasn't there yet. A Russian offensive in Kandahar Province held up the works for another week, during which time I was mostly sequestered inside my host's house. This was as necessary as it was boring, as I discovered to my expense.

For some reason one day they allowed me to sit outside on the street in the sun, where I watched the kids play "glass" as they call marbles. It was warm so I slipped off my woolen blanket though I still had an army jacket on underneath. Otherwise I was dressed just as the locals, right down to beard and turban. Everything was fine until a group of passing teenage boys took an interest in me and came back for a second look. I ignored them until I heard them mutter "shuravee" — their word for a Russian — and pick up rocks from the road. I was rescued from a stoning by my host's son who took me inside and explained that my camouflaged jacket was the same design as a Russian commando's. This part of town was inhabited by Afghan refugees and they left you in no doubt as to how they felt about the occupation of their country.

After that frustrating week in Chaman I was taken to a mujahideen base camp, which consisted of a central fortress with DShK 12.7mm heavy machine guns on the walls, and surrounding compounds of houses and bunkers. At least three different political parties were represented there totaling several hundred men. Things were moving at last, I thought, but not so: I still had three days to wait while official papers were sorted out permitting the convoy we were to travel with to cross the border into Afghanistan.

Meanwhile I met another foreigner in the camp, who was described as a "French journalist, like you." Turned out he was not French (I'm not either), nor a journalist (I am), but a young East German with a pathological hatred of the Russians. He wanted to join up with the muj and go to war with his switchblade to "slit some Russian throats!" He was more impatient to leave than me, complained of waiting eight days, and finally in desperation slipped off by himself on foot. Last I heard he was picked up by the Pakistani border police and sent back to Quetta.

Christmas Day came and went uncelebrated. I jealously hoarded my stash of Mars bars for an emergency, and munched on bread and tea. Inside the fort Iranian-made jeeps were being loaded up with munitions: DShK 12.7mm HMGs and tripods,

Wrapped in shawls, these muj walk to attack an Afghan army post near Kandahar.



Twelve-year-old resistance fighter with Chinese 7.62mm Type-56-1 assault rifle. As always, it's the kids who end up the losers in this type of war.

Chinese-made Type-56 Kalashnikovs with folding stocks and RPG-7s (these still packed in grease), Chinese land mines, webbing, .303 Lee Enfield rifles, cases of ammunition, weapons cleaning gear, cans of petrol and even motorcycles. I couldn't imagine a better Christmas gift than to hit the trail with that lot, but again I was disappointed.

After an abortive start on the 26th, I awoke the following day to the news that "today we go to Afghanistan, *Inshallah* [God willing]." I was all for that — it was the fifth anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, a fitting departure date — though by now I was less than fully psyched up. My mistake. In traditional Afghan form the order to leave is an abrupt one, and if you're not traveling as light as they do, then you'd better be packed and ready. We were lounging around on a dusty road as we'd done the day before when with a roar of overrevved motors, eight fully laden jeeps surged out of the fort.

There was instant chaos as we vied for precarious perches on the now overloaded vehicles. It was every man for himself and right there I lost one of the two guides Amir Jalaluddin had provided for me, and never saw him again. Worse was to come. At 1400 we raced off with horns blaring only to regroup 15 minutes later at the first Pakistani border check post.

Confusion reigned as the muj jockeyed for better seat positions under the eyes of the border guards. I tried to look as insignificant as possible but the muj started ordering me from one jeep to another, yelling . . . "the American [I'm not] goes there," or words to that effect. Well, goodbye Kandahar, I thought, whatever my nationality! But incredibly there was no adverse reaction from the Pakistani guards, and before I knew it I was back on the original jeep again and we were off. It had taken me one month exactly from the day I arrived in Quetta to get myself this far.

I felt like an old hand at the game by the time the second checkpoint came around, and we had to stop for 45 minutes while the convoy leader repaired a motorcycle tire puncture. Then we continued northward, parallel to the border over dusty

mountain roads with many concrete bunkers and anti-tank traps innocuously dotting the scenery. I guessed they were Pakistani army defense positions. We were caked in dust, but if I had known how long it would be before I could have a bath I wouldn't have given it a second thought.

Sometime after nightfall we left the road and began cross-country driving, fording a number of shallow rivers along the way. Around 2030 all the jeeps stopped and the boys got down to pray. We had arrived in Afghanistan.

More than once we got stuck, and likewise lost, but after about two more hours of crashing through the scrub we stopped for the night at a deserted village. It was actually a collection of wrecked houses with only one roof between them. We lit a small fire to warm up, and then collapsed on the dirt floor and huddled together. Our sleep was interrupted by the sound of choppers and machine guns; four jeeps had gone ahead and I guessed they were drawing fire. This shocked me a little for in the Panjsher there was no night flying, and I lay shaking in my sleeping bag. I wasn't sure if it was from the cold or the fear of a Russian commando lobbing a grenade in through the open door.

At first light we camouflaged the jeeps with brush, then rested until 1430. Around 1600, after tea and a little bread, the convoy moved off and we crossed a small mountain range in light rain before breaking out into the flat again. I kept watching for aircraft activity but there was none, perhaps due to the overcast conditions. At nightfall we skirted a town which held an enemy garrison after the muj first fanned out ahead on foot scouting for danger. Some idiot forgot to extinguish his lights and we drew a half-dozen rounds of ineffectual mortar fire.

Soon a light snow started falling and that bitter Afghan cold announced its presence. We all wrapped up in our blankets but they were useless against the full blizzard that was to come. By 0330 we were still driving, by now on a tarred highway and in white-out conditions. Occasionally the wrecks of a destroyed Soviet truck convoy would flash by in the headlights. It was bitterly cold; I'd long since lost any feeling in my toes and I was wearing socks and combat boots while the muj had only leather sandals. It was just one of the many lessons I received on the real meaning of toughness.

Slowly day dawned, dismal, overcast and still snowing. We stopped below a mountain range with yet another flat tire and broken suspension. We followed the mountain edge into flatter country as the snow gave way to rain and the track turned to bog. Around 0930 we came to a nondescript village with recently harvested wheat fields and stopped to light a fire, using stalks from huge roadside piles. I quickly noticed an interesting smell as we dried out around the fire; sure enough, the local dope crop

DShK in action against Soviet SU-25 ground attack aircraft. Mi-24 helicopters later joined the assault against the muj camp, but there were no losses on either side.



Soviet-made 14.5mm ZPU-1 heavy machine gun stands anti-aircraft duty near Kandahar. Anti-aircraft systems are in great demand — but only in limited supply.

had also just been harvested, and we were burning marijuana bushes!

By the time we pulled out at 1600 — after no tea and only a few bread scraps — the remaining three jeeps had already gone. The track was a quagmire and within 15 minutes we were sunk to the axle. The boys were pretty good at yelling advice but noticeably weak on coordinated effort. It was dark before we got out. The rest of the ride was much of the same. When we weren't stuck in the mud we were bounced on the ruts, and guys were literally thrown off the back of the jeep. By this time I was exhausted and semicomatose, immune to the rough ride. Later I snapped alert when I sensed the jeep stopping.

"This is your camp," the muj said. We got off and they drove away. I looked at Abdul Salam, my guide, and asked him where we were.

"I don't know," he said. "We're lost."

We walked for over an hour along a gravel road but it was hopeless. Abdul Salam eventually located a hay shed where we took shelter for the night. We were thoroughly wet, miserable, cold and hungry — about par for the Afghan experience — and it was late, close to 2330. We'd been on the go nonstop with practically no food or sleep for 33 hours.

Abdul Salam shook me awake at 0830 and we walked to a village from where we hitched a ride in a Russian-made truck for two hours, then walked into the small town of Dahla. Dahla meant food: tea, bread, potatoes in onion gravy and eggs! A regular feast. But on the ground were fragments of the green "butterfly" anti-personnel mines the Russians liked to scatter around. They were very common in the Panjsher but this was the



first time I saw them in the south.

We pushed on, walking along the main road in sight of an Afghan army post about 500 meters away. It was somewhat unnerving to say the least.

"What if an army patrol should leave the post and drive down this road?" I asked my guide. He just shrugged at my naiveté. I still had a lot to learn as I'd find out later.

Meanwhile we passed extensive pomegranate orchards and came to another small town where we caught a public bus to Argandab. It was bizarre. We paid our fare like the others, including the Afghan mother opposite me veiled from head to toe. It was a completely normal situation except that I was a foreigner, Abdul Salam had an AK slung under his blanket, and there were three bullet holes neatly punched through the driver's window.

In Argandab, between mouthfuls of delicious pomegranate syrup, I pursued the question of our vulnerability if a jeepload of Russians drove into the town. Heads shook.

"They wouldn't come." Why not? "We would attack them. If they come, it is not with one tank, not even five tanks, but hundreds," they said. Allowing for exaggeration I figured I was safe, but even so I was warned not to wander away from the house.

"There could be some communists," I was told. "They would report you to the Russians. We can't be sure — we would kill them if we knew, but for safety stay here."

At 1600 the next day we drove off on a Massey-Ferguson tractor equipped with Hungarian-made tires to examine extensive bomb damage to a neighboring village. Following that we waded a river and entered an orchard with several large underground bunkers defended by DShK machine guns.

"This is all mujahideen country," Abdul Salam said with pride.

They had been bombed that morning — I'd seen the MiGs

from Argandab — but with no losses. We were about three meters underground with a roof of massive tree trunks covered again with earth. It turned out this camp was commanded by Sholey Malaing who was Frenchman Abuchar's escort when he was captured at Spin Buldak.

Just by coincidence it was New Year's Eve. There was no booze, no women, but what the hell — I had all the sweet tea I could handle!

I spent the next five days at another camp two hours' walk away. This was grape country, extensive vineyards all over, and our home was a 50-year-old *keshmesh khanah*, a special building for drying grapes into raisins. Twenty days earlier this place had been overrun by the Russians in fighting that lasted four days, with jets bombing up to 15 sorties a day. The muj admitted to nine KIA and 20 wounded, putting enemy losses in the hundreds. I asked about weapons captured.

"Only two AK-47s," I was told. Any rockets? "No, the Russians use a rocket that fires once and is then thrown away."

They showed me the discarded fiber-glass tubing — exactly the same as the U.S. LAW (Light Anti-tank Weapon). Were they any good against tanks? "We don't know, we don't have any. The Russians use them against our *qasah* [foxholes]."

The *qasah* are characteristic of Kandahar Province as are the elaborate systems of trenches which interlink with the natural cover provided by the vineyards. I toured the area. Tank tracks tore up the ground everywhere and in some places had bulldozed through the grapevines; there were so many bomb fragments lying around, the place looked like a junk yard. At a point where the muj were dug in and fighting as close as 20-30 meters from the Russians, all the trees were reduced to kindling.

Cluster bombs were used in this assault and we found a live one in a village reduced to rubble. The muj used it for target practice, sending it up in a plume of phosphorescent smoke.



Battle-scarred muj cradles his customized AK. He fights a holy war to free his land from its Soviet invaders.

Then they showed me the wreck of a MiG jet they'd shot down and which had broken up into several pieces in the desert.

By now I was keen to get to Kandahar city. This called for another tractor ride in the desert, circling three Afghan army posts on the way, and then a walk through a small town. This part was tricky. The garrison there had been shelling an outlying village as we approached, and to get through the town meant crossing the Kandahar-Herat highway in full view of two army posts. They took my pack, wrapped it in a blanket, adjusted my disguise, and advised, "If anyone calls you, just keep on walking. Understand?" I did.

We walked single file out onto an open field with a post less than 100 meters on our left. I could plainly see the flags flying and the sentry boxes. Too damned close, and somewhere on the right was another. I didn't look. We stepped across the broad concrete slabs of the highway and walked through the town. Big buzz but no hassle. Next stop was Kandahar.

Our camp there was another *keshmesh khanah*, and from its roof I could clearly see the city. There were such highlights as the Hotel Kandahar (now used by party officials only), the School of Mechanical Engineering and the turquoise-domed mausoleum of Ahmad Shah Durani who founded the modern state of Afghanistan. Away to the east was the airport and the principal Soviet garrison. Every day I watched jets and choppers landing and taking off in the distance.

In the morning I'd been told this would be a rest day so after lunch I began the pressing task of shampooing my hair. I'd no sooner begun when the commander of this *jebha*, Mullah Mohammad Zay, announced: "We go to make war!"

Our target was an Afghan army post in a deserted outlying village. Unlike the Panjsher Valley, it was possible to creep within striking distance of a post with impunity, using the cover of the abandoned surrounding houses. We departed at 1425 on foot, 23 muj divided into four attacking sections. Being the man with the camera I got to witness them all in action.

The attack started with two rounds fired from a shoulder-held 82mm recoilless rifle: Step into the street, fire, step back and reload under covering fire from two AKs, step out and fire again. Immediately the air was alive with bullets.

Mad rush to the second section. Clamber onto a roof; more ear damage from an RPG and the recoilless again, and showered with ejected AK cartridge cases. Return fire. "Stay down!" they yell. Adrenalin rush.

Now around the corner and up a side street, through a hole in a wall to a bombed-out building. Another RPG in action — "Don't stand behind!" — the tremendous backfire of exhaust gases; and a muj repeatedly being knocked from his perch by the recoil of his AK. Reloading AK clips in the rubble and the smell of cordite.

A running crouch to the fourth section as we cross an intersection in sight of the post. The third RPG in action. On the way back in staggered single file. I cross in the open and a burst of machine-gun fire sends spits of dirt from a wall. I hit the road and roll into a ditch (just like in the movies, I think) and the commander cuffs his section leader for not watching out for me. Mohammad Zay uses a megaphone to harangue the post as others yell their defiance. At 1725 we break off and return to camp, stopping for ritual prayers on the way.

Early next morning all weapons were cleaned, ammunition distributed and clips refilled. They'd fired nine rockets, five recoilless shells and 3,000 rounds of AK ammo. As a postscript to the attack Mohammad Zay showed me a Russian hand grenade they'd recovered from the house we'd been in — it had been booby-trapped to a door. A narrow escape.

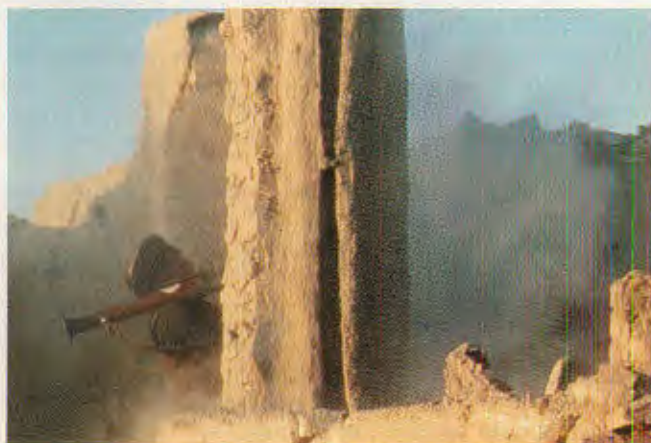
At 0900 with an escort of 11 we began a leisurely walk that — unknown to me — was taking us right into the city of Kandahar. As we neared the city two flags signaled the presence of Afghan army posts which we would have to walk past. We stopped, Mohammad Zay making sure our equipment was covered. He took more care over me and my cameras than his men's weapons which were casually slung under their blankets.

In single file at staggered intervals we approached the city, me waiting for a keen eye with binoculars in the posts to spot the unnatural bulges in our bodies and open up on us. But the only firing was from two Mi-24 Hind gunships circling overhead. At the wreckage of a Soviet tank we turned into a main road leading to our destination — Kabul Bazaar.

Again I was surprised by the close proximity we could gain to the posts. With a note of derision Mohammad Zay explained, "The army controls only two meters on each side of the post — the rest is ours. This is our city . . . this is a mujahideen city!"

My presence caused a stir. Everywhere I was swamped by Afghans, curious but friendly. It was obvious they had not seen a foreigner for some time, the children perhaps never because they stood and gaped. But one young guy evinced no surprise at my arrival. He shook me by the hand and beamed in English, "Hello, welcome to Kandahar!"

RPG-7 in action against an Afghan army post. Major offensives are rarely conducted due to a critical lack of ammunition.



We hung around the Kabul Bazaar for an hour or so, looking at shops and spotting Afghan army posts from the roof tops. The Russians don't patrol here and they don't shop in the bazaars. A finger drawn across the throat was gesture enough to explain why.

Even so I was carefully chaperoned, and my group took the trouble to introduce me to the many armed muj lounging in tea shops or on street corners. We left the city when gunfire broke out from the direction of a post and people scattered from the streets.

In the characteristic Afghan tradition of abrupt departures I was suddenly whisked away on a 90cc Yamaha motorbike and driven 15 kilometers west to another of Amir Jalaluddin's *jebha* in the charge of Commander Abdul Khaliq. In the distance we watched a chopper carrying a load back to the airport in a sling. Though we couldn't determine what its load was, it was possibly a downed aircraft being recovered.

Abdul Khaliq introduced me to other Afghan leaders in the area such as Mullah Malang, Amir of the powerful Hezbi-i-Islami party, and Abdul Hamid (a Jamiat Amir under Aubaidullah of Quetta), who fortunately spoke reasonable English. Pashto is a tough language to crack unlike the Farsi dialect spoken in the Panjsher with which I was more familiar. As a treat we tuned into the BBC on the amir's radio but the news was depressing: Vietnamese attacks on the Thai-Cambodian border.

After lunch we raced through the desert scrub three-up on a motorbike, the driver with a Russian Makarov pistol in his pocket and another of Abdul Hamid's men riding shotgun with an AK. I'd been promised a look at a "live" tank. We entered the western outskirts of Kandahar, called Serfozoh, where there was a combined Soviet-Afghan post protecting a huge army petrol dump. I didn't get as close as I'd have liked but the tank was visible (though well-dug-in), and also what appeared to be an APC.

Later, while getting our bike serviced, a guy galloped into town on a horse and another led in a team of three camels. A great contrast to the machines of war and the new Jawa 350cc motorbike (cost U.S. \$1,000) sitting in a nearby shop.

Same day I was collected by Abdul Khaliq again and motorcycled seven or eight kilometers to another Jamiat *jebha* where I spent the next couple of days. One of the highlights of this stay occurred during the standard and obligatory tour of bomb dam-



Under covering fire, recoilless rifle gunner races to reload.

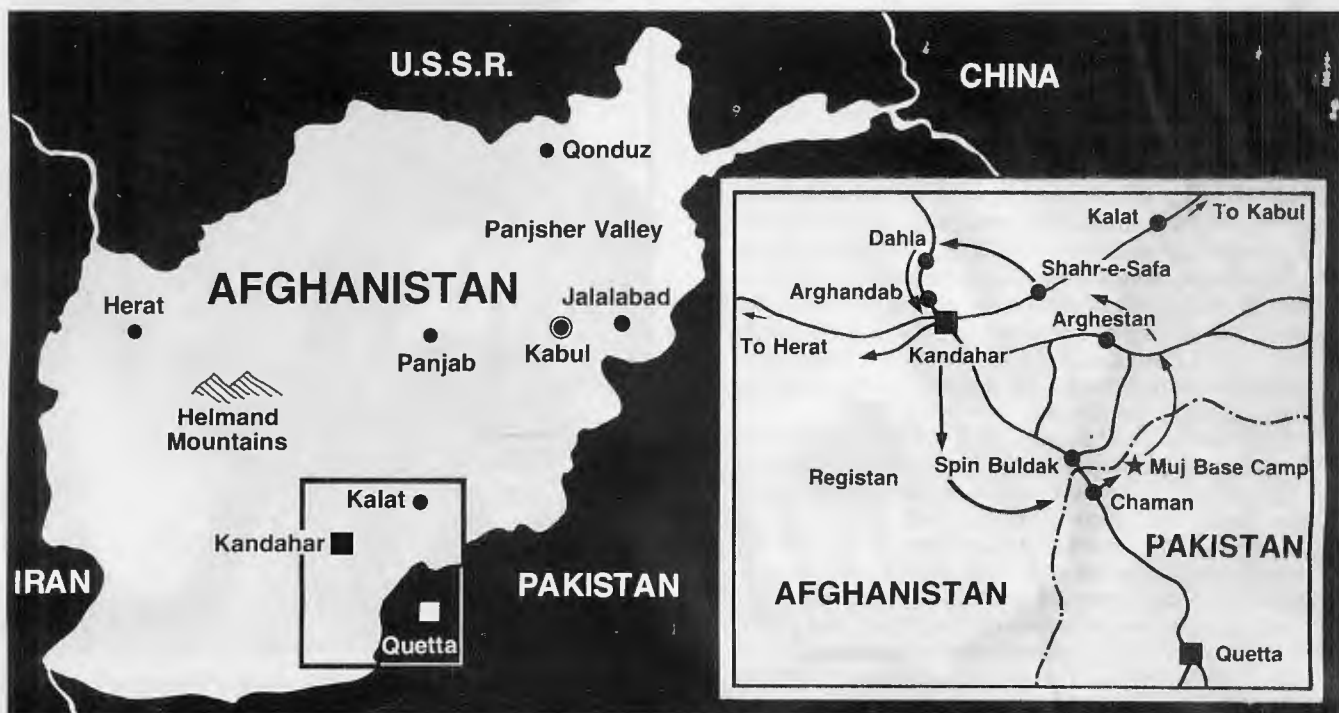
age, unexploded bombs and machine-gun ports. A visiting amir of Harakat Inqilab-i-Islami party — a mullah about 45 years old and looking like Dickens' character Fagan — orchestrated an amazing bit of theater.

He set up the DShK HMG, then he and another muj grabbed their AKs, ran back 50 meters and lay low behind some cover. Then they charged the DShK in a crouch, hitting the dirt at intervals, then running again, both firing their AKs into the air; meanwhile the DShK was firing back at them — flat trajectory — in full-auto bursts! I was stunned. Suddenly the mullah dived on the machine-gunner and mock-clubbed him on the head. My ears were only ringing, but these guys could have been shot. There's a fine line between bravery and insanity, I decided, but either way they earned my respect.

There are about 20 *jebha* in this district, representing at least seven different political parties. Each was protected by a network of trenches and anti-aircraft defense, mainly the 12.7mm DShK heavy machine gun. They need them because they get hammered regularly, usually around sunrise and sunset when visibility is poor, as I was quick to find out.

It was 1730 and I was relaxing at the DShK watching the gunners clean their weapon, when suddenly they yelled. "MiGs!" I thought they were joking but they began loading quickly. On the horizon I saw two black dots, and relaxed — Aha!

Afghanistan: The Soviets' Vietnam, the Afghans' jihad.
INSET: Jake Border's route in Afghanistan.





Empty cartridge case ejects as mujahid fires on an army post in Kandahar city.

Only birds. But in an instant they were on us: very low and very close, not birds but jets — Su-25 ground-attack aircraft.

As they swept over us the boys opened up and I swear the tracer arced between the two jets. Then they climbed and circled, were joined by two others, and dropped parachute flares a few

hundred meters west of us where an incredible torgande rocket barrage landed. Like evil bats the Su-25s dive-bombed two positions, with us in the middle. From all over DShKs opened up, half a dozen or so stream of tracers crisscrossing the sky.

By now extra muj had joined us and were opening ammo cases and loading fresh ammo belts in a frenzy, giving excited cries of “*Allah-o-Akbar!* [God is Great]” every time the DShK roared. The jets were joined by two Mi-24 Hind gunships, firing rockets and miniguns in an awesome display of firepower. They added a noticeable dimension of danger as they could pinpoint their target with greater accuracy while seemingly hovering out of range.

1800 hours came and the attack was over, with no aircraft shot down. I gathered my tangled wits while warming my hands on the heated DShK barrel as the gunners substituted a new one. I felt like a mouse in an elephant pen — thrashed around from all directions.

Back in Kandahar the muj made another hit against the government post they had attacked previously. Two *jebha* combined forces and used the same tactics as before, except this time they had an 82mm mortar but no recoilless rifle; they’d used all the shells on the first attack.

The next day one of Mohammad Zay’s men who had the post under surveillance (using a Soviet gunsight device captured from a tank) took a prisoner — an *askar* or private soldier — caught in the act of planting hand grenades as mines. His assignment seemed to confirm the effectiveness of the two mujahideen attacks, and later the *askar* admitted their combined losses as nine KIA and 17 wounded. The muj, with no losses, were satisfied with this.

Interestingly, this soldier was more literate than his captors. “My name is Fazlullah, I come from Jalalabad,” he wrote in English in my notebook. He claimed he had studied in college there with an American teacher called Mr. Butler.

POLISH WARRIOR IN AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan’s liberation war attracts a very special breed of man and Lech Zondek was clearly one of them.

You have journalists, photographers and filmmakers — among them both the corps of serious veterans of numerous long-range recon trips as well as the dingbat day-trippers in safari suits who pop across the border to bring us the news “live from Afghanistan” — along with various war groupies and weirdos in search of an exotic fix.

But Lech wasn’t a reporter, nor was he searching for the meaning of life. He was a man with a mission, and that mission was to kill Russians. Not as a mercenary, but as a mujahid, a soldier in Afghanistan’s religious crusade to send the Soviets back to where they belong — preferably in a world of hurt in the bargain. Lech was a hopeless romantic and idealist but his motivation came pure and true, based on his personal experiences of life under a communist regime.

I met Lech Zondek in Peshawar after returning from the Panjsher Valley. We lived in the same hotel, got acquainted and fell to yarning over Afghanistan, the Soviets and the muj. I told Lech I knew of a magazine that would be interested in telling his story. He agreed. I didn’t know then that it would be his obituary.

Lech was born in Poland in 1952 and grew up hating his Russian overlords as much as the Afghans hate theirs. As he got older he joined resistance cells though these produced more words than action. Lech was a radical. He wanted to do some damage, or at least be organized and prepared to inflict it should the occasion arise. But nobody was interested; his ideas were considered too provocative.

“At that time Poland seemed to me like a country of the blind,” Lech said. “They were thinking that around the next corner was democracy. The success of Solidarity carried the people like a wave, but I was completely sure that it would



Lech Zondek. Born: Poland, 1952. Died: Afghanistan, 1985 — as a warrior.

He was well treated though stripped of his uniform and sometimes kept in ancient leg irons. I asked what would happen to him.

"He is a communist. We will kill him," came the answer. I was even offered an AK to do the job. It was just a macabre joke of the muj; Fazlullah was still alive at the time I left, though for how long afterward I couldn't say.

The third day after his capture I set out for Abdul Khaliq's *jebha* on foot with two guides. It was cold and wet, and the ground turned to mud. For four days now there had been a *bund* (strike) in the city — a closure of shops in anticipation of a big attack. This had been organized by Mullah Malang and now mujahideen from all parties were streaming into the city to fight. They passed us in many small groups numbering from five to 20 men each, on foot and packing arms. A big show was about to start for them but unfortunately I was on the way out.

We made it to Abdul Khaliq's the next day. He had already arranged for camels to take me back to Pakistan, but we were held up a day because of the wet conditions.

I said farewell to my friend Abdul Salam, who was to stay behind, and at 1030 departed with the camel *wallah* (boss), two camels and two teenage mujahideen on their way to Pakistan to visit their refugee families after an 18-month "tour" of duty. The day started fine but ended up a nightmare. We headed out into Registan — the "land of sand," and I can vouch for that — on what should have been an overnight trip.

Apart from low-flying jet hassles we got lost at midnight, slept six hours, continued without water for seven more until we arrived at a brackish well where the camel *wallah* left us. Just a half-hour walk to the town, he said. Three hours later we made it. Transport from there to Pakistan couldn't be arranged, so after a two-hour rest we set off on foot again at 1800, back into the desert.

We stumbled into a nomad camp at 2100. We had to sleep



Gun emplacement for a 12.7mm DShK HMG in the vineyards of Kandahar Province. Numerous foxholes and tunnels blend in with the natural cover.

outside although we were provided with blankets, and were wakened covered in ice at 0630 for prayers. We pushed on all day in the sun and ended up lost again. Nomads finally put us right, and at 2045 the lights of Pakistan were visible. An hour later we stumbled across the border into a small village not far from Chaman.

After a month inside I'd made it back to the world. ✕

be crushed." So he decided to leave Poland.

Lech chose to emigrate to Australia, a country full of migrants where he felt it would be easy to assimilate. Arriving under refugee status in 1981, Lech eventually settled in Melbourne until he gained citizenship.

He studied at the University of Melbourne — majoring in Russian politics — and it was here he came into contact with Afghans for the first time. The seeds for his future were sown, and slowly the idea began to jell: Afghanistan would become Lech's killing field for Russians.

But he was no fanatic, no hothead. "I don't want to be a gunman. I have a peaceful nature," he told me. He would have preferred the easy life with his leisure time spent climbing mountains.

But as he told fellow Poles in Australia, "If I destroy one tank in Afghanistan, it is one less for Warsaw."

Lech saw the issue in black and white, as do the mujahideen. "Russian expansionism must be stopped," he said. "Their strength comes from this growth — by absorbing other countries — but their system is weak on the inside. If they can be kicked out of just one place it will be a great victory, and if that place is a small nation like Afghanistan, then it would give good heart to the bigger nations occupied by Russians."

So Lech prepared himself for his one-man stand against the Russians. He joined pistol and rifle clubs to practice his shooting skills, and studied unarmed combat and the Russian language. Then in 1984, with some financial backing from two anti-communist organizations in Australia — mostly East European emigrés — Lech departed Australia for Pakistan, and then slipped across the border into Afghanistan.

Lech spent three months in the province of Legar, moving through many different areas, but he first saw combat at Kulangar, a small town just north of the provincial capital at Baraki. Initially armed with a Chinese-made AK assault rifle,

he later switched to a 1943 Lee-Enfield .303 rifle for sniper work. It wasn't altogether too successful.

"It had very bad grouping," Lech said. "The barrel was shot and good for only 100 meters."

Kulangar had a small Afghan army post containing about 60 men, and there was a Soviet base with a combined Russian/Afghan troop strength of over 1,000 about 1.5 kilometers away. Artillery from the base provided a protective umbrella for the smaller post, and the muj and occupiers lived in a state of uneasy truce broken only once in the time that Lech was there.

Lech was swimming in the river and the muj were lounging around eating roasted corn when the war erupted. "We heard the sound of mortar shelling. I dressed quickly and ran, then we hear DShK and small-arms fire also. We passed the outpost 150 meters away, exchanged small-arms fire with them but passed by safely. The Russians had moved from their base with troops and tanks (old models, T-54s and T-55s) and were trying to surprise the village," Lech explained. He went to his assigned position but the Russians stopped their advance before reaching him because they realized they'd lost the element of surprise. They then withdrew. There were no muj casualties.

Lech actually complained that it "was really difficult to push the muj to fight." Were you disappointed then? I asked. "Oh, look," he replied with characteristic candor. "I have no choice . . . Afghanistan is the only one place where I can kill Russians!"

He had his chance when one day the muj decided to ambush a small convoy of three trucks, one APC and one tank that were returning to the base — the residue of a 20-tank convoy that had departed in the morning on a suspected operation elsewhere. They were traveling fast, a truck full of soldiers with guns at the ready in the lead. The

Continued on page 77

IT is hard to find a more inhospitable area in El Salvador than the coastal swamplands of Usulután Province. Located in the southeastern part of the country, it is a maze of dense jungle, neck-deep slime that smells worse than a city sewer and infested with hordes of malaria-carrying mosquitos, not to mention poisonous snakes and frogs. Nonetheless, this savage wilderness has important strategic value in the plans of communist guerrillas fighting to overthrow the democratically elected civilian government of Central America's tiniest republic.

According to Salvadoran military sources, the mangroves provide sanctuary and staging areas for as many as 300 guerrillas who make forays into the Salvadoran heartland to destroy cotton, sugar cane, corn and other crops in an effort to sabotage El Salvador's economy. Moreover, the labyrinth of estuaries makes the Usulután coast an ideal area for the rebels to receive arms shipments from communist Nicaragua.

Napoleon Romero García, a high-ranking guerrilla *comandante* who defected to the government in April of last year, revealed that 70 percent of the guerrillas' arms come from Nicaragua and are secretly shipped in small boats.

"The weapons make a run that starts in the Nicaraguan department of Chinandega and enter Salvadoran territory always by sea near the localities of Jucuarán and Montecristo in Usulután," the former guerrilla commander was quoted as saying in the Salvadoran newspaper *La Prensa Gráfica* in its 13 May 1985 edition.

NAVAL INFANTRY

Battle Testing El Salvador's New Leathernecks

Text & Photos by Steve Salisbury

Until last year, except for occasional army sweeps and naval commando raids, the guerrillas had reigned along much of Usulután's coast. But that was before the elite *Batallón de Infantería de Marina* (Battalion of Naval Infantrymen), or BIM as it is known by its Spanish acronym, was formed to maintain a permanent presence there.

After four months of basic infantry training from Salvadoran instructors and two months of special amphibious training from American Marines at the eastern port city of La Unión, the Salvadoran version of U.S. leathernecks began combat operations last September. The BIM will never storm the beaches of Iwo Jima, but it has learned its counterinsurgency lessons well. Operating in small teams of a half-dozen men and using Force Recon tactics, the BIM has driven the guerrillas from traditional bastions and continues to dog them deep in the mangroves.

One of the reasons for the BIM's success can be traced to the fact that half of the battalion is made up of combat veterans of other infantry units, including some 50 Naval Commandos.

"Whereas the army really isn't suited to operate in swampy coastal terrain and the Naval Commandos are a small unit designed for special operations, the BIM is ideal for its mission," said Captain Humberto Villalta, commandant of the Salvadoran navy. "It has given us excellent results. Besides killing and capturing many terrorists, it has established a presence in areas abandoned by local and central government authority. Since the BIM has come to Usulután, we have had few indications of arms shipments to the subversives by boat."

The future promises to be even tougher for the guerrillas. In July or August of 1987, the United States is scheduled to deliver one

LCM-6 and two LCM-8 landing vessels to the BIM. "This will give us the ability to surprise the terrorists by sea under the cover of darkness, with a company of men, anywhere along the coast," said the captain.

According to Capt. Villalta, the guerrillas are trying to preserve their foothold in coastal Usulután by relocating their noncombatant sympathizers, or *masas*, from zones of guerrilla persistence in northern El Salvador — the province of San Vicente and the Guazapa Volcano — to the abandoned villages and farmland near the mangroves from the Bay of Jiquilisco to the Lempa River.

"The *masas* serve two purposes," he said. "They provide the terrorists with intelligence and they give them food and medicine — at times from supplies which they receive from the organizations for displaced people."

Striking in the *masas* has brought the BIM some successes. "Last November and December, we captured 20 families that the terrorists had transported from Cerro de las Ventanas in San Vicente [Province] across the Lempa River to El Marillo, El Portrero, Sisiguayo and other cantons near the Bay of Jiquilisco," said Captain Juan Ramon Carvajal, the XO of the BIM (which has its temporary barracks at the Atonal Immediate Reaction Infantry Battalion headquarters in Usulután city).

Captain Carvajal estimates that there are at least 2,000 civilians in this area. "Many are displaced *masas* brought by organizations such as the Salvadoran Pro-Displaced Persons Christian Commission and the International Red Cross.

Whether there is collaboration with the subversives in this effort, we don't know. We have no evidence. All we can say is that it's very curious that these organizations are resettling displaced *masas* in a place of great importance to the terrorists."

The BIM realizes that effective counterinsurgency doesn't consist solely of military might; hearts and minds have to be won also. To this end, the BIM has carried out numerous civic action operations in conjunction with the National Commission of Restoration of Areas (CONARA).

"Maybe some of the things we give to the *campesinos* may end up with the guerrillas, but that is little compared to the general good will and support we generate among the people. It makes them say, 'Hey, the armed forces are not bad, they give us food and medicine. The guerrillas only take.'"

But for the terrorists who refuse to lay down their weapons, the BIM will never be satisfied until they are dead or behind bars.

Being the only gringo to have passed the Salvadoran Naval Commando Course (see "SOF Naval Commando," SOF, December 1985), I was given a special invitation by Capt. Villalta to see his crack marine battalion operate in the field. During my two-week stay with the BIM from 9 to 22 April, it was clear that these naval infantrymen deserve the reputation they hold for being some of El Salvador's finest combat troops. And when the BIM has to call on someone to execute a particularly touchy special op, it often calls on Sergeant Armando Alberto Mejía Fuentes and his eight-man recon/hatchet team.

On the night of 20 April, I joined Sgt. Mejía's team for a particularly risky mission: deep infiltration into Indian country to hit a terrorist squad at the village of Sisiguayo on the Bay of Jiquilisco. According to military intelligence, eight to 10 guerrillas of the Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers (PRTC) were frequently visiting Sisiguayo for provisions and R&R. In the past, the elusive rebel gang slipped away from sweeps by government troops, but if anyone was going to catch the guerrillas off guard, it was Sergeant Mejía's team.

Sergeant Mejía's troops were a young, spirited bunch full of piss and vinegar. They were relaxed and joking as we waited for sundown. But at 1900, their camouflage-painted faces turned serious when we moved out under a three-quarter moon from the secluded thicket where other BIM troops had their outpost. Sergeant Mejía wanted to make sure I would miss none of the action.

"You stay with me," ordered the tough, 22-year-old NCO and I took my place as third man in our Indian file five meters behind the sergeant. They were all business, armed to the teeth with M16s, LAW rockets, an M79 grenade launcher and an M60 machine gun. We had walked about an hour over broken terrain when we ran one by one across a dusty road to the cover of bushes on the other side.



TOP: Many villagers appreciate the protection offered by the BIM against the depredations of the communists. This trooper holds a child from one of the small villages in southern Usulután Province.

ABOVE: A marine medic attends to a wounded civilian after the firefight in Sisiguayo.

RIGHT: A Salvadoran marine takes cover in anticipation of an enemy attack.

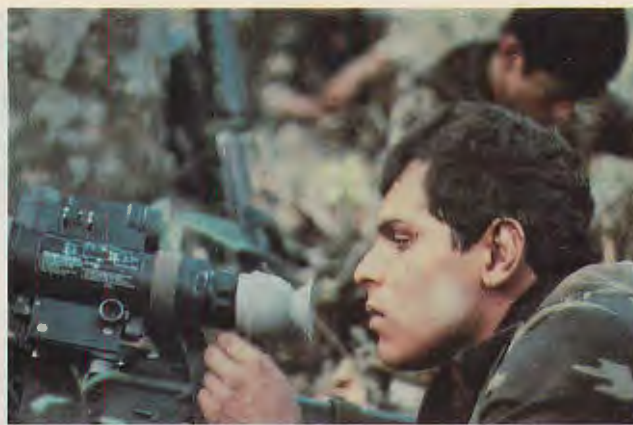


"We're now in the zone of the terrorists," whispered the sergeant as we rested for a couple minutes. "We have to be careful here." We continued our march, walking along jungle trails, wading across streams and slogging through swamps.

The farther we marched, the sparser the vegetation became. It was the hottest period of the dry season and the once lush, verdant fields were parched blankets of scrub brush. Still, our point man, Belloso, a tough man with Indianlike features, knew the area well and had a knack for finding thickets to conceal our movements. Coming from a clump of trees onto a road junction, we heard what sounded like the thud of boots. We quickly spread out to the nearest cover for an improvised ambush. My heartbeat quickened as the footsteps grew louder.

But the ambush turned out to be no ambush at all. The silhouette of a cow ambled into our gunsights. It wasn't audible, but I bet every trooper let out a sigh. We shook ourselves off, then followed dirt roads and cut across fields for about an hour, ever so alertly scanning the flat, bare terrain for guerrillas, when we heard the BOOM-boom-BOOM-boom of an acoustic bass. There was a party at Sisiguayo.

"Mark my words," whispered a trooper as we paused at a clump of mango trees to assess the best approaches to the village. "There are guerrilleros at that fiesta." Walking along the tree line of a roadside, we heard the laughter and voices of people coming toward us.



"Quick, hide." Our small, sinewy sergeant waved his hand in warning. We hurriedly climbed over a low barbed-wire fence atop a road embankment and carefully watched as 12 happy partygoers walked by oblivious to our presence. It was imperative we not be seen. Many of the villagers were guerrilla supporters and it wouldn't be any fun to have a tipped-off enemy spring a counterambush on us.

It seemed the whole hamlet was attending the party. We cautiously weaved among the empty

huts, climbed a second barbed-wire fence and advanced in a low crouch beside it in a shallow ditch. The clang of the off-key salsa music became louder. The outlines of people dancing came into view in the glow from the cooking fire in one of the two wooden shacks a few meters behind them.

We divided into three groups. Sergeant Mejía ordered an M79 grenadier and a rifleman to form the left (or eastern) flank. The sergeant and I established

TOP LEFT: A Salvadoran marine lieutenant checks out a night-vision scope before a night mission.

ABOVE LEFT: BIM troopers gaze at the body of a dead guerrilla after the firefight at Sisiguayo.

ABOVE RIGHT: A typical BIM recon team looks a lot like a U.S. Special Forces A-Team out of Vietnam.

RIGHT: Salvadoran marines slog through rivers and mud as they make their way toward the village of Sisiguayo.



brush to conceal us. There, we intently panned the shadowy throng for the silhouettes of rifles.

"I think there are some [guerrillas] by the fence," he whispered. We lay in wait for the Gs to part from the crowd so that we could attack them without endangering civilians.

Minutes seemed like hours. Fire ants had a field day stinging my sweaty, clammy body and mosquitos swarmed my face. At least the 50 to 60 party guests were having fun dancing, drinking and singing.

It had just dawned on the sarge and me how vulnerable we were on the naked ground when a man, who had gone to take a piss at the tree where Belloso was hiding, shouted, "Soldiers, soldiers!" bringing the music to an abrupt halt. There was a tense pause of seconds. My heart jumped into my throat.

The people nervously murmured. They sensed imminent danger and started back-pedaling, then running from what in a moment would be a patio of death and pandemonium. Belloso's hard, coffee-colored eyes locked on a husky, mean-looking guerrilla standing ten meters away by a pile of clay roof tiles at an entrance of the fence. It was like high noon at the O.K. corral except that here it was 2320 hours with high-powered automatic rifles.

"Halt," Belloso shouted, holding the guerrilla in his gunsights. The seasoned trooper was reluctant to shoot with civilians nearby, but the terrorist opened fire, leaving Belloso no choice. Two rounds of 5.56 ripped into Belloso's thigh, a third into his shooting hand. Still, the tough infantryman had the strength to squeeze his trigger and return the burst, blowing the communist away with a chest shot. "It was kill or be killed," he would later comment.

the right flank, while Belloso, with the M60 machine gunner, his assistant, our radio operator and burly medic kept close to the fence in the center.

We continued our advance on our bellies, slithering like salamanders in the dirt. Inching forward while the band played, we paused during the intervals between songs. The sergeant and I had come as close as 20 meters from the revelers when we ran out of scrub



Mayhem erupted. Screaming people ran in terror. Two guerrillas fled the dance area, firing indiscriminately in panic with long bursts. More rebels in the bush near the houses also banged away with a cacophony of G3s, FALs, M16s and an M79. Three M79 shells exploded around us and tracer rounds zipped inches overhead. We fired back just as furiously at the muzzle flashes after momentarily hesitating for the civilians to get out of the way. Our grenadier kept his blooper barrel hot pumping nine HE rounds into the guerrilla-infested thicket while another trooper blasted it with a LAW.

The firefight raged about 15 minutes before the guerrillas fled for the mangroves. Still, the danger was not over for me and the sarge. We had to eat dirt under a volley of friendly fire, including a LAW rocket exploding perilously close behind us, as we trudged to our rally point at a dip in the field some 75 meters back.

There, the troops of the center group were awaiting orders. Our medic was expertly bandaging Beloso's wounds. "I killed him," said the wounded trooper, referring to the guerrilla. "Take his rifle and web gear."

The sergeant ordered his men to post security and radioed for a chopper to extract us, then went to strip the G's body of an AR-15 and a military belt fitted with black leather pouches, similar to those used by the Salvadoran National Guard, containing

five or six loaded 20-round magazines to be added to the 30-round magazine in the captured rifle. The AR-15's serial number was 1,139,592, indicating its capture by communist forces during the Vietnam War.

A few meters from the dead terrorist lay the corpse of a man who appeared to be in his thirties. He was found unarmed.

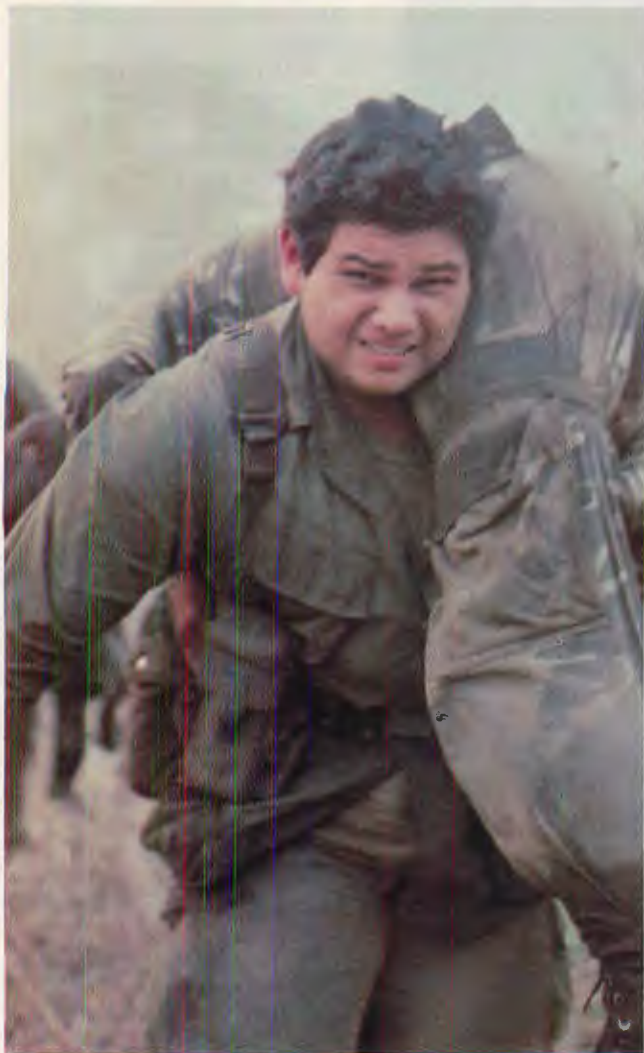
I followed the sergeant past the bodies into the two shacks where we found about 20 people cowering in fear. "Don't shoot. We're civilians," they said. We reassured them and asked if there was anyone wounded who needed medical attention.

They told us of a boy badly wounded in the crossfire, but by the time we found him, he was already dead. A haggard man who identified himself as the boy's father ruefully told of his 14-year-old son dying in his arms.

"I told him that he would be all right," he said on the verge of tears, "but he stopped breathing and died as I held him. Jorge was a good boy, a hard worker. It must be God's will." I inarticulately offered the man condolences.

He also told us the corpse found near the dead G was his cousin and vocalist of the band. Other villagers corroborated this. However, the troops suspected that the two bodies found without weapons were guerrillas. Their boots were the heavy kind the guerrillas wear, said Sergeant Mejía. And Beloso insisted he saw guerrillas recovering rifles and web gear from their fallen comrades.

According to the villagers, about a platoon of rebels were at the dance when the shooting started. "There were 25," said Rosa Ayala, the owner of the house where her daughter was celebrating her fifteenth birthday. "They just came.



TOP: After the raid, suspected guerrillas were detained, questioned and released.

ABOVE: A Salvadoran marine carries a wounded trooper to a waiting helicopter for evacuation.

LEFT: Sergeant Mejía poses for the camera after the Sisiguayo operation.



First a few, then more and more. They wouldn't let us end the party." Mrs. Ayala claimed the guerrillas were not invited. But the troops doubted it, finding a perfumed handkerchief in the pocket of the dead guerrilla.

"Where's that bird?" said the sarge, impatient for the chopper to come. Mindful of the fact that our nine-man unit would be vulnerable if two dozen rebels returned for revenge, the sergeant radioed again for the Huey. But word came back over the PRC-77 that a helicopter wouldn't be risked coming to this area of heavy guerrilla persistence at night unless we had gravely wounded. While Belloso wasn't gravely wounded he couldn't walk, so Sergeant Mejía called for reinforcements.

Lieutenant Cesar Mejía (no relation to Sergeant Mejía) and his section of some 35 men marched seven clicks over rough terrain in record time, arriving at 0200. No one could rest, though, the plague of gnats was so fierce. Some troops and I talked to the villagers. They appeared to bear no hostility to us, accepting the harsh reality of war. In fact, the teenage girls, wearing the modest Sunday dresses soiled in the shoot-out, dancing with the Gs before it, were flirting with the troopers.

At the break of dawn the troops briefly detained two teenage boys on suspicion they might be guerrillas. The boys told us the dead guerrilla's pseudonym was Alberto. No other villagers acknowledged knowing him.

"Well, the party's over for Alberto," joked Sergeant Mejía. The troops searched the houses for weapons, finding none. However, a woman brought us her 16-year-old son who had been hit by a stray bullet in the wrist last night. He might have been hurt worse by the treatment: a



Salvadoran marine recon squad poses in front of a U.S.-made helicopter after a mission.

tourniquet. Elvis, the laid-back medic of Lieutenant Mejía's Third Section, cleaned the wound and properly bandaged the boy. If the woman had brought her son a little earlier, said Lieutenant Mejía, he could have been evacuated in the chopper that came for Belloso at 0600. The stocky, square-jawed lieutenant offered to take the boy to the hospital, but his mother declined, saying it would be better to wait for the Red Cross the next day.

We looked for other wounded civilians, but couldn't find any. We marched back to our command post content knowing it was *buenas noches* forever for at least one G. The troops could have killed more guerrillas, but at the unacceptable cost of many civilian casualties. Thus, the rebels who escaped ironically owed their lives to the BIM's humanitarian concern for the safety of the civilian supporters. Still, the guerrillas will have their day of reckoning, vow the infantrymen. You can bet the Gs will think twice about attending parties in the future.

"Anytime you surprise the guerrillas at a party in their backyard and kill one, it's a good hit," said a military official at a Western embassy in San Salvador upon being told of the Sisiguayo operation. "It really hurts their morale. It's always lamentable if civilians are killed in the crossfire. That happens in war. But you have to keep the pressure on the enemy all the time, especially when he's doing R&R."

The guerrillas have tried to turn their loss on the battlefield into a disinformation victory. In the days following the firefight, the rebel *Radio Venceremos* broadcast that government troops opened fire on unarmed peasants at a dance in Sisiguayo, killing three civilians and wounding dozens more. That was an expected response on the part of the communists. What was different about the opposition reaction was the foreign liberals' reaction.

On 24 April a woman human rights worker went to Sisiguayo. On 8 May a Reuters reporter and his photographer also visited the village. They quoted Rosa Ayala and other villagers as saying there were no guerrillas at the dance and three civilians were killed by unprovoked armed forces gunfire. The human rights worker reported the villagers listed 10 wounded people, all younger than 16 except for a 64-year-old man. The Reuters correspondent said the

villagers told him that 22 civilians were wounded. In neither case did the investigators interview those who were allegedly wounded. Moreover, it was reported that the villagers insisted the naval infantrymen did not treat any wounded civilians.

The villagers were also reported as saying that a North American "politico," guerrilla jargon for political commissar, had asked to cut the hearts out of the corpses (not a shred of truth there), but was denied permission by the Salvadoran lieutenant. According to the Reuters reporter—who conducted his interviews while a squad of guerrillas calling themselves the Anarchist Detachment were in the hamlet—some villagers claimed a trooper finished off the wounded 14-year-old boy, firing two shots into his head as a "Christmas present."

Although having denied knowing the dead guerrilla while the BIM was in Sisiguayo, villagers directed the human rights worker and journalists to the house of his widow who was their neighbor. She too denied her husband, José Ricardo Hernandez, 32, was an insurgent and was photographed by Reuters weeping as her son and other peasants looked at a slide of me and troops posing by her dead husband.

"The people of Sisiguayo are guerrilla collaborators," said Capt. Villalta in San Salvador. "Their friends, relatives and husbands are subversives. Because of that, they want to besmirch the armed forces with false accusations of human rights violations. It was good you were there to give the lie to this effort of disinformation." ✕



SOF AFRICA

WATERBORNE MERCES

Sailing with the Infamous

by Gerry S. Thomas

DISMAL, drizzling rain chilled the dawn of Friday, 7 February 1975, in the Angolan coastal town of San Antonio. Trees trembled in the riverfront breeze by the former marine depot office, which had been turned 10 days earlier into a headquarters by newly arrived British mercenaries.

An excited Angolan burst in at 0830, shouting that Cuban troops were only five miles away. The seven-man detachment, meeting to firm up plans to destroy key installations, was accustomed to native overreaction. They continued to plot positions for explosive charges at the airfield. But their skepticism melted quickly as automatic weapons fire chattered from the nearby hospital.

The Brits poured out of the depot with their FN rifles just as a BRDM pulled up disgorging heavily armed FAPLA soldiers. Hopelessly outgunned, their only chance was to reach the power boat tied at the end of the jetty. A crowd of desperate Angolans had nearly swamped the 20-foot craft, but a sudden burst of machine-gun fire from the Cuban armored car cleared enough deck to permit the mercenaries to clamber aboard and disappear into the broad river mist toward the safety of Zaire, just across the estuary.

This ignominious retreat managed to be the salvation of female reporter Robin Wright, 16 lucky Angolans and most of the mercenaries. Unfortunately, one Briton

who remained to cover the cast-off was captured and executed.

While this debacle is the only recorded naval operation in the short-lived Angolan mercenary episode, naval operations have in fact figured prominently in mercenary strategy in modern Africa. Though the mention of mercenary activity rarely conjures up

the image of "sailors of fortune," naval mercenary actions have encompassed a wide range of sophisticated operations including river and lake patrols, amphibious assaults, pirate raids and covert action. For the mercenary leader, a clear understanding of naval power can mean the difference between success and failure — life and death.

River and Lake Patrols

Rivers and their tributaries crisscross the Congo, so it was natural for mercenary commander Jean Schramme to look for a way to use them to his best advantage when recalled to duty in 1964 by Prime Minister Tshombe. As leader of the 10 Commando, known popularly as the Leopard Battalion, he was tasked with control and pacification of lower Orientale Province which had fallen under the sway of roving bands of

MERCENARY WATCHER

Gerry S. Thomas has spent much of his academic career studying the phenomenon of mercenarism. Thomas is presently a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy and is currently serving with the Defense Intelligence Agency. His book, *Mercenary Troops in Modern Africa*, is considered one of the best source books dealing with that subject.

Congolese paratroopers in battle dress use rubber rafts to cross a lake near Leopoldville during a training exercise in the early 1960s. Photo: AP/Wide World

armed Marxist rebels. To support his white-led native black troops, Schramme created a small naval force for operations on the Loba and Lubutu Rivers which run east-to-west across the province to join the great Lualaba at Loba.

For logistics, Schramme appropriated a small, powered ferry capable of transporting the armed jeeps that formed the backbone of his strike force. For defense during movement and for routine patrols to establish an active presence, he designed a fast, armed launch. Called a *vedette*, it was a low-profile launch, about 30 feet long, with a souped-up Chevy engine capable of 35 kilometers per hour. Armed with a 7.62mm machine gun forward, a 12.7mm machine gun amidships and a 60mm mortar aft, the launch could carry a section of 11 men along with their arms, ammunition and supplies.

The fast launch would operate under escort by two small outboard "scout" craft to surprise suspected enemy positions along the river and to demonstrate control to the natives with a visible armed presence. In addition to these patrol operations, the craft provided effective supporting cover to ground forces moving on important riverside objectives such as railheads, roadways and depots.

A second and more widely known contemporary Congo mercenary organization was developed and led by South African Michael "Mad Mike" Hoare. This group of anglophone volunteers was known as 5 Commando and figured prominently in the 1964 relief of the Stanleyville (Kisangani) hostages and in later pacification operations in central and northeastern Congo.

Hoare's Commando also recognized the essentiality of a river patrol force and armed a captured small (200 tons) tug which they renamed "Geri" and used frequently on the Lualaba River. This and other small, armed launches proved especially valuable to the mercenaries when they were forced to stop their ground advance in order to repair bridges. In these frequent instances, a launch would be brought up to provide covering firepower for the engineer crews, while freeing more of the ground troops for other duty.

Control of the major lakes in the east was also a significant problem in the Congo where the bulk of the 30-man 5 Commando navy was stationed at Albertville (Kalemie) on Lake Tanganyika in 1964. The fleet consisted of an 80-foot radar-equipped gunboat named *Ermans*, and six high-powered patrol boats capable of a silent 30 knots. These smaller boats were U.S. Swift boats that were supplied to the central government and flown in on U.S. aircraft. However, all the craft were manned for the *Armée Nationale Congolaise* (ANC) by the mercenaries who were charged with interdiction operations on the lake.

The Congo rebels had been receiving considerable assistance from Eastern Bloc nations that were channeling supplies and arms through Kigoma, Tanzania, thence across Lake Tanganyika to the Congolese port of Baraka. The rebels themselves maintained at least three transports as well as several very fast motor launches mounted with machine guns. Although these fast boats, speeding without lights in night operations, proved difficult to interdict, Hoare's navy conducted continuous intercept patrols and did enjoy significant successes, one time sinking four rebel craft in a single operation off Kabimba in late 1965.

In the war of Biafran secession, control of the rivers was a critical question for both contenders since the tiny rebel country was bounded on three sides by the Niger, Benue and Cross rivers whose tributaries make a patchwork of the landscape. Control of the rivers passed early to the Nigerian federal forces and allowed them to maintain a hold on Onitsha, the main east-west control point in the heart of Biafra. Only along the Cross River to the east did the Biafran mercenaries enjoy limited successes; but, here, this was due to control of the coastline and not the river itself.

Pirate Raiders

Biafra also suffered from a blockade of its coastline imposed early by the federal government. Effectively maintained by the Nigerian navy, the blockade force included a major Dutch-built frigate, five seaward defense boats and three Soviet P-6-class patrol boats. Early in the war, one of the Ford-class seaward defense boats was seized by Biafra, but was sunk in Port Harcourt by the Nigerians before any operations could be undertaken.

The blockade of the secessionist coastline prevented maritime resupply and forced the Biafrans to turn to a costly and often tenuous air bridge lifeline. But, to resupply their own occupation troops, the Nigerians found it necessary to form convoys of small freighters to travel up the rivers in the region. Typically, a federal convoy would depart Lagos under escort and enter Opobo Bay to reach the Niger Delta by one of its several arms. The mercenaries observed that the patrol boat escorts would turn back at the mouth of the river and perceived an opportunity to use this Nigerian weakness to break the blockade.

Colonel Rolf Steiner, the German-born mercenary commander of the white-led native Fourth Commando Brigade, and a former Italian marine commando, Georgio Norbiato, then commandeered three small, fast Chris-Craft boats from the Port Harcourt Sailing Club as the nucleus of their navy. After mounting machine guns in the bows, the boats held room for four commandos plus a pilot.

Thus armed, they maneuvered to a position under camouflage at the river's edge, about 50 meters from the navigation channel, and waited in ambush. The plan worked and the pirate raiders were able to board and seize two freighters in their first attempt.



Colonel Jean "Black Jack" Schramme is one of the few mercenary leaders in black Africa to lead a successful *coup d'état* on an African dictator. Photo: AP/Wide World

The encouraging results yielded tons of desperately needed equipment including five Land Rovers, 2,000 uniforms, tinned food, two million cartridges of 7.62mm ammunition, 10 tons of 81/82mm mortar shells and grenades as well as the 20mm Oerlikon cannons mounted on each freighter. *Norbiato* was killed within the month and there are no indications that this successful tactic was further exploited although other mercenary navy units remained in the Niger Delta to perform early warning patrols.

Amphibious Operations

While amphibious operations in Biafra were the exclusive province of the federal forces, Hoare's Congo mercenary group carried out two major amphibious assaults. The first, in 1964, given the cover name "Operation Watch-Chain," was intended to be a lakeborne assault by a small commando unit in support of a two-pronged ANC ground advance on the rebel-held city of Albertville.

Hoare's optimistic plan envisioned a 100-mile trip in four outboard boats that were to creep along the coast of Lake Tanganyika during the calm nights when the surface was usually still. Once at Albertville, they were to storm ashore, seize the airfield, and then join up with the converging ANC forces.

The trip began inauspiciously with sabotage that eliminated one boat and a minor mutiny as the recalcitrant infantrymen resisted orders to leave terra firma. Once underway, things went well the first night; but, during the next, two boats developed engine trouble and everyone was forced to paddle, finally making landfall twenty kilometers south of Albertville. The exhausted

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TAURUS M85

There's No Snubbing This Bull

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

The perfect combination for those who require concealability and power: the Taurus M85 .38 Special snubnose with Disruptor exploding ammunition.

THE .38 Special cartridge and the small snubnosed revolvers for which it is so often chambered are constant objects of derision among big-bore proponents. These critics are only concerned with full-size, fight-stopping cartridges — the .45 ACP, of course, since nothing else will do. The fact is that nothing short of a hand-held nuclear device will stop a fight with certainty.

Strutting gun scribes notwithstanding, plainclothes dicks from Seattle to Savannah pack .38 Special snubbies every day of the week on almost every part of the body from ankle to armpit. Small, compact, easily concealable, light enough to carry for long shifts and possessing adequate power in most of the infrequent scenarios their use is required, their popularity with those who hunt in the asphalt jungle will continue into the foreseeable future.

Forjas Taurus, S.A., in São Paulo, Brazil, turns out some handy hardware for hardly half the price of their competitors (see "Taurus," SOF, December '85). Among these are a line of revolvers that by now bear only cosmetic similarity to their Smith & Wesson ancestors. Taurus' M85 series loosely resembles the S&W 'J' frame Chiefs Specials. Three versions of the M85 are available. A blued variant carries a suggested list price of \$189.90. Satin nickel finish will cost you \$204 and those who desire the attributes of stainless steel must pay \$240.90.

All three revolvers have mill-finished, drop-forged frames. Our test specimen was fabricated from 416 stainless steel. The top of the barrel and frame have a glass-beaded, nonglare matte finish. The remaining surfaces on the barrel, frame and cylinder carry a moderately high-gloss polish that rivals anything produced in the United States. All



TAURUS M85 SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber	.38 Special
Operation	Five-shot revolver. Single- and double-action. Internal transfer bar safety. Floating firing pin.
Weight, empty	20¼ ounces
Length, overall	6¾ inches
Barrel	Five-groove with a right-hand twist of one turn in 18¼ inches. Integral shroud and solid rib.
Barrel length	2 inches (3-inch unshrouded barrel also available).
Stocks	Checked Brazilian Guajuvira. Squarebutt target, roundbutt target or standard (contoured to match frame).
Sights	Long serrated ramp front with fixed square notch rear; matte finish.
Finishes	Blued, satin nickel or stainless steel.
Price	Blued — \$189.90. Satin nickel — \$204. Stainless steel — \$240.90.
Manufacturer	Forjas Taurus, S.A., Dept. SOF, Av. Victor Manzini 450, São Paulo, Brazil, CEP 04745.
U.S. distributor	Taurus International Manufacturing Inc., Dept. SOF, 4563 SW 71st Avenue, P.O. Box 558567, Ludlum Branch, Miami, FL 33155.

visible milling marks have been removed and the fit of all metal and wood components is excellent. Cylinder-to-forcing-cone gap on our test specimen was only 0.004 inch (0.003-0.008 inch is the generally accepted tolerance range). Fore-and-aft cylinder play was minimal, but the lateral play bordered on the excessive. The cylinder holds five rounds and rotation is to the left. The short ejector rod does not permit complete ejection of the empty cases. The cylinder latch is patterned after that of S&W and must be pushed forward to swing out the cylinder.

The M85 is available with either a 3- or 2-inch barrel. The late Chic Gaylord, holster maker and street-wise cop of some repute, was one of the few professionals to advocate a 3-inch barrel length in this type of revolver. Chic maintained without equivocation that 3-inch snubbies were every bit as easy to conceal in proper holsters and offered a significant increase in performance and accuracy potential. But few listened, and Taurus sells 95 percent of its M85 revolvers with 2-inch barrels.

The 2-inch barrel is equipped with a full-length solid rib and an integral ejector shroud. Three-inch barrels have no ejector shroud. In 1984 Taurus stopped pinning the barrels to the frames after perfecting a method of precision threading that eliminated this requirement. All barrels are five-groove with a right-hand twist of one turn in 18¾ inches. Our 2-inch specimen has an overall length of 6¾ inches and weighs 20¼ ounces.

A guide-in-coil-type mainspring is set into the small roundbutt frame. In total disregard of the current fetish for smooth triggers, the M85's has six grooves which can be easily ground away. Such nonsense keeps pistolsmiths employed. Of far greater importance is the trigger pull. Single-action trigger pull weight on our test specimen was a rather gritty 3.75 pounds. The double-action pull weight was an entirely reasonable 10 pounds with absolutely no loading at the end of the stroke.

Mounted in the frame, the floating firing pin must be struck by the ubiquitous transfer bar, which, in turn, receives the hammer's full blow. Should the finger slip off the trigger while the hammer is falling forward, the transfer bar will drop downward, out of the hammer's path, and the firing pin will not be driven forward.

The sight system is simple and quite adequate for the projected use of a snubnose revolver. A large square notch cut into the top strap's rib complements a long, serrated ramp front sight. Both are fixed and neither has been coated with any kind of phosphorescent lipstick. These sights shot to the point of aim regardless of bullet weight at 7 yards, but 3 inches to the right.

Grip selection for small revolvers is more often than not the cause for considerable consternation. Taurus offers three. If we choose the smallest — the standard grip panels which exactly match the contour of the bantam-sized roundbutt frame — we



ABOVE: The Taurus M85: a .38 Special snubby from Brazil that's every bit as good as its S&W look-alike but less expensive.

BELOW: The Taurus M85 revolver, shown in an Assault Systems ballistic nylon holster, is compact, light, and extremely concealable.



maximize the ability to effectively conceal the weapon, but the tradeoff is unpalatable to all except Tom Thumb. There is precious little here to wrap a normal-sized hand around. The consequence is an increase in felt recoil and barrel whip that adversely affects accuracy potential and reacquisition of the target when all but the mildest of loads are fired. On the other hand, monstrous oversize grip panels bring us back to a size configuration no easier to conceal than a large-framed .357 Magnum. Taurus offers roundbutt target grips of the so-called "banana" style which present us with this dilemma. However, M85 revolvers are most commonly fitted with squarebutt target grips that come closer to a successful compromise than any others I have seen. Just slightly oversize, they adequately conform to the dimensions of a normal-sized hand, direct the bore's axis into alignment with the arm and fill the void between the trigger guard and the frame's front strap. All

of the Taurus grips are crudely checkered and made from Brazilian Guajuvira, an attractive tropical hardwood.

If possible, bargain handguns should be stuffed into reasonably priced holsters. Assault Systems Inc. (Dept. SOF, 869 Horan Drive, Fenton, MO 63026-2478) sells their Companion belt holster for small revolvers and semiauto pistols for \$24.50. Fabricated from five-layer black ballistic nylon, it's available with either a closed end (Model BHC) or open end (Model BHCO). An adjustable velcro strap secures the weapon. The belt loop will accommodate belts up to 2 inches in width. That's a bit too wide, but one would be hard-pressed to find a better holster for this price.

The .38 Special cartridge has been around a long time, has had mountains of abuse dumped upon it, and is still going strong. Developed by S&W, it was introduced with their Military and Police Model revolver in 1902. Its salient feature has always been accuracy. It remains the standard U.S. police cartridge and has been used with considerable success for both match shooting and small game hunting.

As earlier stated, the pistol-caliber controversy — mostly a tempest in a teapot — is largely the product of those who feel that bore size of at least .44 caliber has the greatest stopping power. They have generally settled on the .45 ACP cartridge as their champion based on such ludicrous reports as Hatcher's formula of Relative Stopping Power derived from the Thompson-LaGarde study on animal tissue. To add further confusion, the more recent National Institute of Justice study on the incapacitation effects of police handgun ammunition — which points in the other direction — is flawed by a conflict with reality.

In fact, the bullet's configuration and its effect upon expansion and yaw are more important in determining the degree of internal destruction than either the mass or diameter. This means that if we select an efficient projectile we can increase the odds

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A little over a year ago Al Mar Knives added a heavy-duty folding knife, the SERE (Survival-Escape-Resistance-Evasion) Survival, to their line of high-quality imported cutlery. (See "Al Mar: The Green Beret Cutler," SOF, December '85.) This knife was the product of a joint design effort by Al and the Special Forces survival school CO, Lieutenant Colonel James Rowe. Lieutenant Colonel Rowe spent five years as a prisoner of the Viet Cong before escaping, so he has more than a little firsthand knowledge of the subject.

According to the ads for the SERE Survival, the knife's purpose was "to fulfill the program's need for a large heavy-duty yet lightweight folding knife which would be used 90 percent of the time as a survival tool and 10 percent of the time as a fighting knife."

Not long after the knife was introduced I bought one and gave it a field test while working as a forester in remote areas of the Washington Cascades. I found the SERE Survival to be a high-quality rugged folder, but I did have some questions about the promotional claims.

First, I don't think it has much potential as a fighter for several reasons. All folders are weak in the handle-tang junction area, much more so than the controversial hollow-handle fixed-blade design. The rocker-bar blade lock is sensitive to fouling and may not lock open if there is even a small amount of sand or dirt in the mechanism. Like all folders it requires opening — and troops may not have that kind of time flexibility in combat. With a 4½-inch blade the SERE Survival is a bit short for my taste as a close-combat weapon, and because the top of the blade is exposed when folded the false edge can't be sharpened.

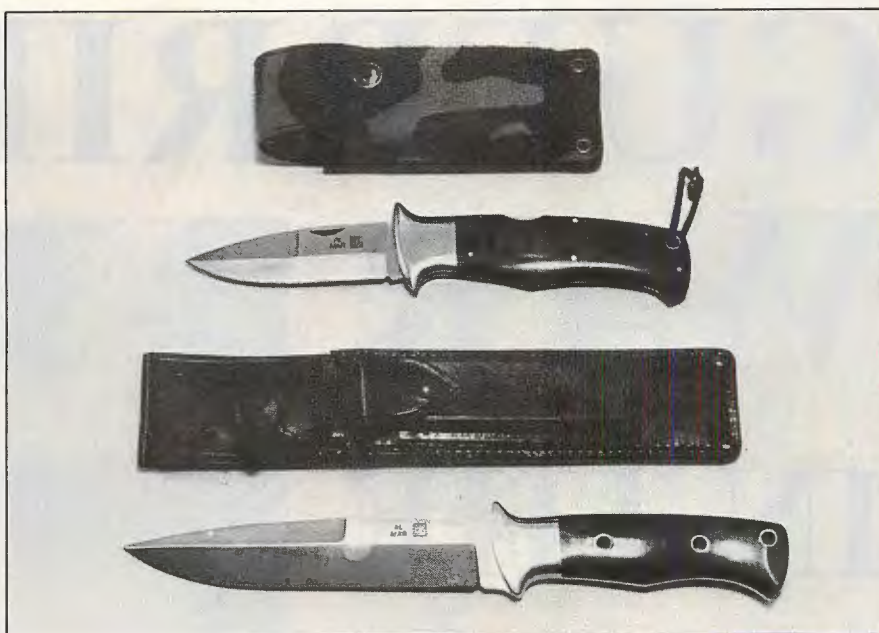
While riding in the scabbard its total weight comes to 19 ounces which I don't find to be especially light when compared to other knives of the same blade length. The basic Ka-Bar and scabbard only weigh 16 ounces, and it has a 7-inch blade.

My final conclusion was that the SERE Survival would be an excellent choice for someone needing a heavy-duty folding knife for outdoor work or recreation, but for military applications a fixed blade would be more suitable.

Al and I talked this over at the time and while we didn't necessarily agree, Al did mention that he had a fixed-blade SERE in the works. The 1986 SHOT Show at Houston was the first chance I had to look over the newer version, the SERE 6, and I was impressed. New models of Al Mar knives always seem to be in short supply, but I finally managed to locate a SERE 6 for field testing.

It consists of a 7½x1¾x⅜-³/₁₆-inch drop-point blade of AM-6 stainless steel with a Rockwell hardness of 57-59. The top of the blade is ground with a 4½-inch unsharpened false edge. Like the original SERE Survival, the handguard is a part of heavy stainless bolster. Handle slabs are made of green micarta and are drilled out to lighten weight,

SOF KNIVES



TOP: The original SERE Survival folder and camouflaged belt pouch. BOTTOM: The new SERE 6 combat/survival knife and scabbard. A sawback version will soon be available. Photo: Pat Dick

SERE SURVIVAL

Al Mar's Multipurpose Blades

by Steven Dick

ON THE EDGE

Steve Dick knows a good knife when he sees one. He's been collecting them since the mid-1960s, and put his knowledge to good use while serving as a Ranger with Charlie Company, 75th Infantry, Vietnam, and later with the 82nd Airborne. He has published more than 25 knife-related articles for a number of national publications, and we welcome his first submission to SOF.

and to allow the knife to be lashed to the scabbard during parachute jumps or other rough operations. Overall length of the handle is 5½ inches. The scabbard is black leather with grommet holes along the sides, and a pouch on the front contains one of Al's excellent gray medium-coarse ceramic stones. Total weight of the knife and scabbard comes to 24 ounces, and its price is \$175.

My first test of the SERE 6 was the Bagwell: "Chop two 2x4s in half and see if it still will shave the hair off my arm." I'm not

sure how accurate this test is when comparing blades of different lengths. It seems to me the edge of a long, heavy bowie that chops through the 2x4s in a dozen blows has had a lot less blade use than a lighter knife that requires 50 strokes. Regardless, the SERE 6 still shaved the hairs off my arm after chopping through two Douglas fir 2x4s.

Starting the blade grind higher up on the SERE 6 gives it a thin-edge profile which is useful when making slicing strokes through material. As part of my testing I used the knife to slice chunks of elk into steaks, clean fish and dice vegetables. It's a little heavy for a kitchen knife, but I felt this was a realistic way to test a knife for the sort of tasks it would perform under survival conditions. Basic cutting chores will quickly tell you how handy a knife will be during field use, and I was pleased with the way the SERE 6 handled.

In addition to Bagwell's 2x4 chopping test, I took the SERE 6 out into my backyard and tried it out on a number of hardwood red alders ranging from a half-inch to

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GUERRILLA WAR IN THE HILLS

Mercs Come to Appalachia

by James L. Pate



PREMONITIONS of doom haunted Hayes West. He knew coal mining as a tough and dangerous job in the best of times. In May 1985, conditions were bad. Negotiations between the United Mine Workers of America and the A.T. Massey Coal Company had failed — again. The coal fields were a powder keg. And tempers were burning short.

West, a coal hauler, knew a storm was brewing. There's a saying among coal mine operators in these hills: *When the leaves turn green, the miners get mean.* He mentioned his foreboding to family members up in Raccoon Hollow (pronounced "holler" by natives), and to his friends across the Tug Fork River down in Hatfield Bottom. He even made a couple of last requests, just in case...

On 29 May, Hayes West, 35, was lead driver in a convoy of coal trucks rumbling up Coeburn Mountain, 18 miles northeast of Pikeville, Ky. As he topped the mountain crest at about 8 a.m., sniper fire echoed from the tree-covered hilltops. A spray of machine gun bullets raked the convoy. West's truck lurched to a halt. He stumbled out, mortally wounded, and lay down beneath the truck. His brother, Phil, driver of

the second truck, ran up to help him.

The Rev. Paul Dean Justice preached Hayes' funeral, as West had requested. The overflow crowd at the Primitive Baptist Church in Raccoon Creek also obliged him by singing "That Old Time Religion." His sister, Maxine Williams, kept clutching hysterically at the coffin, fainting at one point. West was laid out in a light blue velour sport shirt and his favorite baseball cap, embroidered with yellow letters reading: "Used, Abused and Confused."

Over a year later, no arrests have been made.

Violence is splashed across the hard-scrabble history of U.S. coal mining, from the Molly Maguires in 19th century Pennsylvania to the 1914 Ludlow massacre in which over 25 striking Colorado miners were gunned down by company men. The murders of UMWA presidential hopeful Joseph Yablonski, his wife and daughter by rival union members in 1970 are a more recent example.

And bloodshed is nothing new in the backwoods where Hayes West grew up. It's laced like a scarlet thread through the homespun cultural fabric of Pike County, Ky., and Mingo County, W.Va. The two

Windshield of West's truck. Premonitions of doom came true for West when he was fatally wounded by sniper fire while hauling nonunion coal. Photo: Mark Francis

are divided by the Tug Fork River, which snakes between the remote mountain lairs of the Hatfield and McCoy clans.

This is a last rough-and-tumble refuge for spitting, bragging, brawling, unwashed democracy. Towns in the surrounding region have plain-spoken names like War, Justice and Relief; places of worship like the "5 & 6 Free Will Baptist Church" and the "Aracoma Jesus Only Temple." Snake-handling sects and "talking in tongues" are not unknown. Union and religion are fairly synonymous with many people, and can be primitive and brutal in practice. Deliverance of one sort or another is never very far away. In the Code of the Hills, a violent death may be considered natural causes.

Outsiders asking which side — the UMWA or the A.T. Massey Coal Company — is most responsible for terrorizing the region likely will find themselves used, abused and confused. Union members will say news coverage was slanted for management. Nonunion people will say reports fa-

vored the union. Each says *theirs* is the unbiased version. When I stopped to ask for directions, a hulking cross-eyed man with a harelip — putting up a hand-lettered sign, “For Sale: Game Chickens” — stared hard and said ominously “the best ‘thang’ for you to do is go back to town.”

What *is* certain is that a guerrilla war erupted in several counties of southern West Virginia and southeastern Kentucky early last year. Dozens of cars, houses, mine offices — and people on both sides — drew gunfire. Electrical substations wired to nearby mines were dynamited, leaving thousands of residential consumers in the dark. Radio transmission towers were blown up. Tires and windshields were slashed and smashed, vehicles burned. Trees were felled and truck drivers shot at when they stopped to clear the road.

Mines operating under the corporate umbrella of Massey Coal Company raised the ante by bringing in scores of professional — and some not-so-professional — security personnel. Mine owners said they were necessary to protect personnel and property. The union said the presence of these hired guns aggravated an already volatile situation.

The professionals — a small army — ranged from former two-bit cops to experts in counterinsurgency and sniping-countersniping: Marine Corps and Special Forces veterans of Vietnam, ex-Secret Service agents, other men who’d served in foreign armies and worked as soldiers of fortune in Africa, Central America and the Middle East.

Massey spent millions of dollars retaining security firms to recruit, train and deploy these men. They were armed with M16s and shotguns and supplemented by miles of fence, concertina wire and steel-reinforced barricades. Sniper nests and fortified bunkers were set up. There were even electronic surveillance systems and tripwire booby traps.

It was war. The mine owners arranged for two armored locomotives with bulletproof glass — one known as the Bull Moose Special — to haul the hundreds of coal cars filled by nonunion miners during the 18-month strike. Two armored personnel carriers were trucked into Massey’s Sprouse Creek mine one night. The APCs were kept out of sight, for the most part. Management spokesmen said they were merely used to provide a secure storage place for rifles. The miners claimed they were mounted with .30-caliber machine guns.

Like other large coal companies, Massey belonged to the Bituminous Coal Operators Association, which negotiated union contracts for mine owners. The old contract dated from 1981. Massey managers decided the BCOA no longer represented their best interests and pulled out. Massey announced that the UMWA would have to negotiate separately with each of its subsidiary mines. Beginning in October 1984, the UMWA staged a selective strike against Massey mines in West Virginia and Kentucky. And



TOP: Scanning for snipers was a difficult task for coal mine security forces. The hills of West Virginia and Kentucky provide an ideal haven for sniping and heavy foliage makes the culprits almost impossible to spot. Photo: Mark Francis.

ABOVE: West Virginia state troopers had their weapons chambered as strike violence threatened. These miners got the message and began to disperse after seeing these lawmen pump rounds into their shotguns. Photo: Mark Francis

the violence began.

Strikers set up sandbagged picket shacks. Insults and threats were shouted at nonunion miners going to work. Soon rocks were thrown instead of words. Vandalism against Massey property skyrocketed. Sniper fire was common. It was war.

Truckers Roger and Susan Light hauled coal from Massey mines. Their 14x70-foot house trailer in the Kentucky community of Blackberry Creek — ancestral home of the McCoy clan — soon came under regular gunfire. The Lights decided to move with their 3-year-old daughter to another neighborhood. As their mobile home was being towed past a UMWA picket line, rocks and bricks were hurled, causing about \$7,000 in damage.

They were lucky. Mrs. Brenda Faye Bowling of Pike County was lying in bed talking on the phone about 11:40 p.m. on 18 September 1985, “when I saw the lamp just fly apart. Then I just heard pow, pow, pow; and realized I had been shot.” She was hospitalized with gunshot wounds in her head, shoulder and hip. Her husband, Dan, is a Massey Coal employee.

In another incident, Massey’s mine at nearby Sidney had its radio antenna and communications shack dynamited. Next, power transformers and substations fell prey to gunfire and dynamite, cutting off electricity to Massey mines in the Big Creek area and over a thousand local residences. Trucks hauling nonunion coal on both sides of the Tug Fork started taking sniper fire. Four other drivers were wounded the same day Hayes West was killed. The home of his brother, Phil West, was hit by gunfire a week later.

Hayes West “was a hard-working, conscientious family man trying to earn his living and he was assassinated in doing so,” said a fellow truck driver who asked not to be named. “It’s hard to believe this is the United States and not some Third World country where hired assassins rule, endangering honest working people.”

Trucker Ricky Starr of Red Jacket,



ABOVE: Coal mine guards had to abandon their truck when rock-throwing strikers rushed them. It still smolders after being torched by miners. Photo: Mark Francis



LEFT: "Trigger," a sniping-countersniping consultant who worked at Sidney, poses behind a spotter, who is wearing the sniper's traditional ghillie suit used in camouflage.

W. Va., would probably agree. He survived an ambush unscathed. Steven Kinzer, 23, did not. He was hospitalized with a gunshot wound after his truck was hit. Lawmen searched the hillsides around Matewan, W. Va. — once the home of Anderson "Devil Anse" Hatfield — looking for snipers. In nearby McCarr, Ky., William May's home came under attack. The home of Tommy Marcum, president of the Massey mine at Sidney, took five shots from a high-powered rifle. Two men, one a local union president, were arrested in that incident.

Don Blankenship, another Massey executive who called himself "the most hated man in Mingo County," moved his family out. Blankenship estimates related damages at the Sprouse Creek, Rocky Hollow and Rawl mines during the first eight months of the strike at \$750,00, including \$200,000 in related medical expenses for injured and wounded nonunion miners, \$300,000 to replace cars and trucks burned or otherwise damaged — part of that for 600 windshields

— and \$80,000 for gunfire damage and vandalism to his office and other mine buildings.

These figures do not take into account strike costs at five other Massey mines in West Virginia and more in Kentucky. None of the figures reflect security costs, which exceeded \$1 million at the Sidney, Ky., mine alone, according to sources. Not surprisingly, Blankenship said he never slept in the same location more than two nights in a row during the war.

"This is just like Central America," said miner Fred Deerfield of Matewan. He pointed to over a dozen West Virginia State Police cars cruising a two-mile stretch of road between Matewan and the state line at the Tug Fork River. On the opposite bank, Kentucky state troopers had turned their border into an occupied zone.

Between February and June 1985, West Virginia spent \$750,000 for extra state police patrols in the southern coal fields. The Mingo County seat of Williamson had its normal contingent of seven state troopers increased to 32, all working 14- and 16-hour shifts. State lawmen alone made 311 strike-related arrests in Mingo County in the first eight months of conflict.

The massive police presence was necessary. In Logan County, W. Va., police arrested William Deskins, the sheriff of Pike County, Ky., for carrying a loaded weapon in his vehicle. Deskins said he pulled his shotgun when several strikers brandished clubs and baseball bats. In Pikeville, where Deskins' office is located, 40-year-old Judy Mullins was shot while walking a picket line at Massey's Big Bear Mine. A week later, Kentucky Governor Martha Layne Collins asked State Police Commissioner Morgan Elkins to investigate reports that sniping was endangering school children being transported by bus to Blackberry Creek Elementary School. Across the river, Matewan residents voiced concern to West Virginia officials about gunfire around the local high school. The town had been the site of a legendary gunfight between union supporters and coal company security guards in the early 1920s.

"It's almost like civil war now," said Matewan Mayor Robert McCoy, himself a descendant of the famous feuding family. "This has gone way too far and there's no end in sight. People are afraid to travel on the highways. We've got enough problems down here without this."

The violence had become random and mindless, with plenty of innocent folk caught in the middle. Thirty families in Lynco Hollow, a quiet, close-knit community in Wyoming County, W. Va., were in a virtual no man's land. Massey's Big Bear Mine sits at the top of the hollow. A picket line was set up at the hollow's mouth. In between, squeezed against the single rutted road and the steep hillsides, were about 30

TOP: A European hired as a security guard monitors video cameras used as part of a surveillance system at a coal mine in Sidney, Ky. Mine owners later used still photos and videotapes as evidence of violence and vandalism by strikers.

BOTTOM: Aerial view of coal tippie at Sidney, Ky. Sniper fire became so bad a security consultant had the small bulletproof structure (upper right) built so he could watch — and hopefully shoot — snipers hiding on adjacent hillsides.

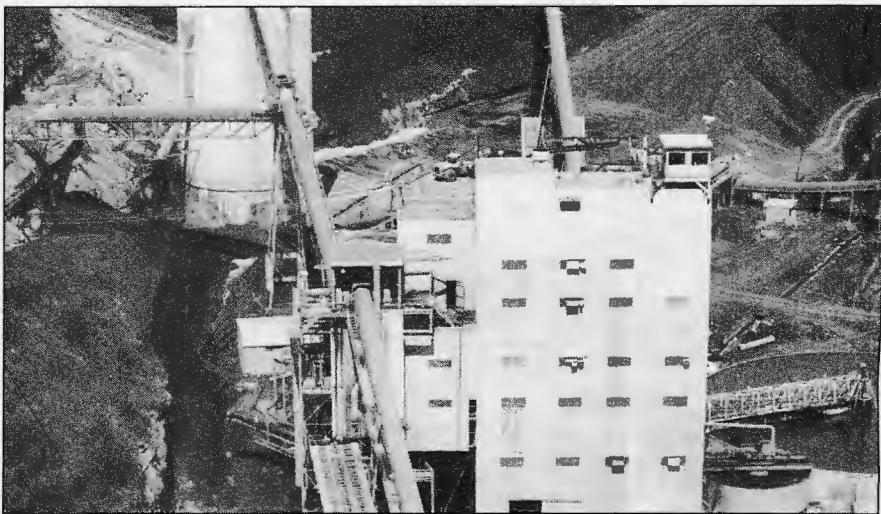
look-alike homes, many with clotheslines on their front porches. When Massey tried to bus a load of security guards across the picket line, strikers attacked with clubs, beating the sides of the bus in a near-riot. The bus withdrew under gunfire. Massey had to fly guards and supplies in and out of the Big Bear property by helicopter. Big Bear President Norman Lester declined to comment on the size of his security force, or its available firepower, except to say, "When you talk about protection, there are things necessary for that protection."

Two security firms employed by the owners came under fire of a different sort: legal action. West Virginia Secretary of State Ken Hechler initiated action to revoke the state license of Southeastern Security and Investigations Inc. His office reportedly received numerous complaints about the tactics and brutality of Southeastern guards.

John W. Hunter, owner of Hunter Inc. and the R.C. Security Co., was jailed after he allegedly attempted to recruit a federal undercover agent to attack Manuel D. Williams, a UMWA strike coordinator in southern West Virginia. Hunter gave him a .38-caliber pistol, the agent charged in a sworn statement, and said he wanted Williams to have "an attitude adjustment," possibly including "breaking arms and legs." (About a week before his indictment, Hunter allegedly offered to buy and install new radios for two dozen Raleigh County deputy patrol cars, according to Sheriff Michael Mangum. "I didn't see it as a bribe," the sheriff said, "but I was a little offended.")

Probably the most professional security firm retained by Massey was Vance International of Fairfax, Va., owned and headed by Chuck Vance, a former Secret Service agent who worked the White House detail and later married Susan Ford, daughter of the former president. Vance personnel replaced Pinkerton guards in several of Massey's subsidiary mines. Ironically, Vance had provided security services in the past to UMWA officials. Vance declined to discuss his contract with Massey or answer any questions about the 18-month strike. But SOF sources offered a glimpse of the Vance operations in Kentucky.

Vance recruits for the Massey contract were brought to suburban Virginia for an intensive training course before being assigned in the coal fields, sources say. This training included crowd control and the proper level of response for potentially violent situations. Emphasis was on avoiding



violence if at all possible, said one source who completed the course. Guards were provided with M16s, shotguns and/or pistols, body armor, shin guards and helmets. Each Vance guard was paid \$115 per day, with a \$300 per month food allowance. Security forces ate and slept on the mine property, with leave every few weeks to safe areas away from the coal fields.

Specialists were also recruited, including personnel skilled in explosive ordnance disposal, countersniping, paramedic operations and communications. One Massey mine at Oceana had 30 Vance guards under the direction of a retired Special Forces captain. Each unit had at least one or two Green Beret veterans assigned, sources said, and several veterans of Rhodesia, Central America and the Middle East — soldiers of fortune and veterans of foreign armies — were sprinkled among the Vance ranks.

At the Massey mine in Sidney, Ky., where sniping had been particularly bad, Vance brought in a sniping-countersniping expert locally known as "Trigger." He has written for *Soldier of Fortune* under another nom de guerre. Trigger served in the Marine Corps for 25 years, including three Vietnam tours, before entering the private sector as a

consultant. When sniping from adjacent hillsides became intense at Sidney — a rugged area that resembles Afghanistan with trees — Trigger ordered a 24x8-foot OP with bulletproof windows built atop the coal tippie. The cost of the structure was about \$45,000. According to one Vance employee at Sidney, "money for security measures was absolutely no problem."

Small, inconspicuous flags visible from the Sidney OP were set up on distant approaches to the mine gate, which was heavily fortified. Although it never became necessary, the flags were to be used for Trigger to compute windage in long-range target acquisition.

West Virginia's Secretary of State Hechler said Massey's decision to hire outside security personnel "was like putting a spark in a tinder box. It created a more explosive situation. Many of these guys are tough, macho types who enjoy pushing people around. Many out-of-state firms hire these people because they have records of excessive force."

Mark Francis, a reporter for the *Williamson Daily News* and a journalistic veteran of

Continued on page 94

SOF HISTORY

UDTs IN KOREA

Swimming Against the Communist Tide

by John B. Dwyer



THE situation looked grim. Communist North Korean troops had swept down the peninsula in July 1950, and the outnumbered U.S. and ROK forces found themselves squeezed behind the Pusan perimeter in the extreme south. Practically the entire country was "behind enemy lines" and MacArthur's Inchon landing counterstroke was two months away. Some sort of action had to be taken immediately to relieve growing enemy pressure on the perimeter, some effective means developed of harassing and interdicting the steady flow of arms and men moved south by the North Koreans on coast-hugging rail lines. Any successful action would also draw enemy troops away from Pusan, not to mention drawing attention away from the negative publicity generated by U.S. and ROK forces falling back to the perimeter.

Every stop-gap remedy was attempted to help turn the tide including naval shore bombardment. Unfortunately, ships' radar had not yet been developed which could delineate and pinpoint darkened trains moving against a land background. And so on quiet nights one could hear the frustrated cursing of gunnery crews as the rail cars continued to trundle south.

Air bombardment had also proven mostly ineffective due to the fact that targeted trains would simply hide in any of numerous railroad tunnels blasted through the mountainous coastal terrain.

General O.P. Smith's 1st Marine Division was on the way but not scheduled to arrive for almost a month. Various command headquarters were racking their collective brains to come up with an effective method of attacking the problem.

Aboard his flagship, the USS *Mount McKinley*, 1st Amphibious Force CO, Rear Admiral James H. Doyle, convened long planning sessions, his staff discussing and debating various tactical options. They finally agreed on what they hoped was an answer. Enter the U.S. Navy's Underwater Demolition Teams (UDT).

These underwater warriors got their start during World War II. Toward the end of the Pacific island-hopping campaign, UDT Advanced Training Base-Maui CO, Commander John T. Koehler, began a new set of courses for operators. Commander Koehler, who'd earned a Silver Star commanding UDT One during its first operation at Roi-Namur in February 1943, started training UDTs in small-unit tactics, advanced night recon techniques and special weapons training. As the primary UDT doctrinal developer, he envisioned UDTs having to fight and survive inland beyond their normal high-water-mark operational limits. This concept evolved into a secondary mission for UDTs: operations above the high-water mark for purposes of reconnaissance and demolition raids, and the insertion/extraction of agents and guerrillas. For UDTs deployed to Korea this secondary mission

Frogmen in training prepare to practice underwater demolitions. Photo: U.S. Navy



Two of the APD 127 *Begor's* LCPs, loaded with ROK guerrillas, practice insertion techniques as they speed toward shore. Photo: Tofte collection

would become the primary one as they executed various special operations that would continue for the duration.

Lieutenant Junior Grade George Atcheson was commanding a 10-man UDT Three Detachment in Japan when the Korean conflict erupted. The detachment had deployed from Coronado in June to U.S. Naval Base Yokosuka in Japan to participate in planned amphibious training exercises with designated 8th Army regimental combat teams.

Atcheson and his men were conducting beach surveys near Camp McGill, 20 miles from Yokosuka, when the exercises were abruptly canceled and the team was ordered aboard Rear Admiral Doyle's flagship. There, Atcheson learned he and his men were now going to become a raiding group. Their mission would be to demolish a small railroad bridge near the southern coastal town of Yosu.

Timely intelligence data on the target area was so sparse that it had to be gleaned from WWII sources. One thing was known, however. Like other coastal areas, the southern region was a maze of estuaries and islands where high tides and swift currents could make navigation, not to mention swimming, hazardous. Other than that there seemed to be no serious navigational or terrain impediments.

An operational plan was quickly devised. Atcheson and his men were bundled aboard a plane for the flight to Sasebo, Japan, where transport waited to carry them 150 miles north to Yosu — by now 45 miles behind enemy lines. Converted destroyer escorts, called Assault Personnel Destroyers (APD), were ideal for launching special operations due to their speed, 125-man carrying capacity and magazines for explosives storage.

Steaming at its flank speed of 25 knots, APD *Diachenko* arrived in the target area shortly before midnight on 5 August 1950. Crew members and UDTs helped launch two of the APD's Landing Craft-Personnel (LCP — updated Higgins boats with a small ramp in the bow wide enough for two men abreast). One towed Atcheson and boatswain's mate Warren G. Foley in a seven-

man rubber boat (IBS — inflatable boat, small). The other carried Lieutenant Bill Thede, officer in charge of an "on call" landing party, ready to reinforce if needed.

After being towed in to about 1,000 yards offshore, the plan called for Atcheson and Foley to paddle their IBS 500 yards closer before beginning their swimming insertion. A rising full moon proved to be the bad omen Atcheson thought it would be. Their primary target was too far behind a large postwar landfill for access, so a secondary target, a small bridge at the far end of a nearby railroad tunnel, was selected. As the pair paddled toward their objective, they became increasingly conscious of being spotlighted by the moon. Atcheson cursed himself for not having provided flotation for the submachine guns he'd chosen for the mission. He ended up armed with three grenades and a .45, Foley with grenades and his Ka-Bar. Time to take the plunge.

Wearing khaki swim trunks and black camo grease they silently slipped into the warm water. The 500-yard swim against a heavy current took 30 minutes and left them gasping on the dark, pebbly shore. No time to rest, though. The full-moon jinx held as they confronted another unexpected obstacle in the form of a 20-foot-high seawall separating them from their objective. After finding a way inland they scrambled and climbed up, executed a cursory recon of the target bridge and tunnel, then signaled with their penlights for the demolitions-laden IBS to proceed ashore with Foley backtracking to lead the "powder train" inland.

As Atcheson recalls: "I was just beginning to relax when a handcar carrying about 10 North Korean soldiers suddenly clanked out of the tunnel behind me. They stopped at once, struck by the panorama of an APD, LCPs and rubber boats all laid out before them in the moonlight. My next mistake was to duck under the small bridge instead of taking cover on higher ground. Foley heard the NKs arrive and hurried back to help me, bringing one of the Tommy guns. The NKs opened fire on him as indeed did I, having failed to identify the figure running toward me in the moonlight. Foley fell off the seawall onto the rocks below. Galvanized by the necessity to shift the odds in our favor, I threw my grenades in the direction of the NKs, an action that either forced them to better cover or discouraged them



UDT operators aboard the APD *Horace A. Bass* between missions. From left to right: Lt. j.g. Phil Wilson, Lt. Cmdr. Kelly Welch, Lt. Gordon B. Tribble and Lt. j.g. Ted Fielding. Photo: Rear Adm. Kelly Welch collection

altogether. In any case the firing ceased and they had disappeared. Moments later I peered over the seawall to find out what was going on, only to have my hat shot off by an alert sailor waiting below for an enemy soldier to do just that. After hastily identifying myself, I slid down the seawall and rejoined the group. A waiting LCP towed us back to the *Diachenko*."

As it turned out Foley had not been seriously injured, sustaining a smashed kneecap and wounds in hand and thigh. Atcheson, believing he had inadvertently inflicted the gunshot wounds, was relieved to learn later that it was a North Korean 7mm rifle exit wound. Thus did boatswain's mate Foley become the first naval casualty of the Korean conflict.

Even as the *Diachenko* was steaming back to Sasebo after that first abortive UDT special operations mission, UDT One under Lieutenant Commander David F. "Kelly" Welch was arriving on APD *Horace A. Bass* at Camp McGill. Team One was one of five UDTs that survived post-WWII reorganization and strength reductions. It had deployed from Coronado (also the base for UDTs Three and Five) with a half-strength complement of 50 personnel along with two platoons of the Marine 1st Amphibious Reconnaissance Company under lieutenants Dana Cashion and Phil Shutler. (Following the return and debriefing of Atcheson's UDT Three Detachment, it was attached to UDT One.)

Utilizing lessons learned from that first unsuccessful raid and all available planning data, UDT One and amphibious recon personnel, working from the *Horace A. Bass*, began intensive training in and around Sagami Wan and off Sasebo to perfect a workable SOP (standard operating procedure) for night raiding tactics. Marine Corps Major Edward P. Dupras was put in charge of the two 1st Amphibious Recon Platoons. Based on his vast experience he was instrumental in developing an effective SOP.

No stranger to combat or command, Maj. Dupras had served with 1st Raider Battalion at "Bloody Ridge" on Guadalcanal before ending up in China where he commanded

Naval Group China/SACO's Camp Two from which he led indigenous guerrillas against invading Japanese. And now his experience would be put to use in Korea.

Also providing valuable input were the UDT WWII veterans of teams One and Three. They, the recon Marines and experienced crew members of the APD 124 *Horace A. Bass* developed the following working SOP: 1) The *Bass* would transport personnel to within two to three miles of a coastal objective. 2) LCPs would be launched and proceed shoreward towing rubber boats carrying UDTs and recon Marines to within 1,000 yards of objective. Underwater mufflers on LCPs assured no sound would give the raiders' approach away to shore sentries. 3) From the lead UDT boat, recon swimmers in an IBS would paddle to within 500 yards offshore from which point they'd execute a swimming insertion ashore to make sure the coast was clear. Other UDTs would remain in the IBS and make what observations they could with an infrared "snooper scope." 4) The 15-30-minute advance recon completed, recon Marines would be signaled by penlight to land at predetermined beach perimeter positions. It was in this portion of the SOP that UDTs needed beach security (and extra firepower if needed), allowing them to concentrate on their demo work. 5) Perimeter established, UDTs would quickly move inland, set charges at bridge, tunnel or tracks using TNT or C-3 interconnected with prima-cord, and then withdraw to the perimeter. (All explosives, detonators, etc., were stowed in a separate IBS to facilitate operations while some personnel stowed prima-cord wrapped around their waists.) 6) At the perimeter, all but designated firing officers would return to the LCP via IBS. With rubber boats pulling away, firing officers would pull 30-minute-delay fuze lighters on

Mark 13 clockwork time fuzes, then swim out to the waiting IBS and back to the APD where all would await a satisfying explosion.

On another mission a Special Operations Group made up of 25 UDT men from Teams One and Three as well as from the 1st Amphibious Recon Company traveled to a spot south of their first target area. The objective this time was two tunnel entrances about 100 yards apart with a culvert and small bridge between the two tunnel mouths. This time the UDTs had to contend with rugged terrain and objectives 50 feet above and 150 yards from the beach. The recon swimmers had discovered two North Korean peasants sleeping in an empty machine-gun nest near one tunnel mouth. After requesting instructions they tied them up using lengths of prima-cord, the only thing handy. And while the charges were set and blown, the tunnel mouths weren't as completely blocked as they'd hoped. Their frustration was heightened after a south-bound train had raced by just 10 minutes before the charges blew. Slightly disgruntled, the UDTs returned to Sasebo to replenish explosives stores and refit the *Bass* for continued operations.

After the mission Maj. Dupras received telephone orders to report to Rear Adm. Doyle ASAP. At a conference on the *Mt. McKinley* he was told to cancel further raids and start planning for beach recons on Korea's east coast. It seemed that while MacArthur was pushing for the landing to occur at Inchon, both Rear Adm. Doyle and 1st Marine Division CO, General Smith, plus their staffs were convinced that location would present extreme difficulties for an amphibious assault. Major Dupras was instructed to use the Special Operations Group and find possible alternate landing sites. After being given two alternatives he was told to return to Sasebo, develop and rehearse operational techniques, then report back when ready to proceed.

One of the major concerns regarding Inchon was that the tidal range was on the order of 14-18 feet; low water plus a flat beach gradient could seriously impede a major landing.

For these recons the same basic insertion techniques used for the demo raids would be utilized. From then on it all changed. Along the lines of "classic" UDT missions, the west coast operations involved working out the following SOP: After a Marine beach perimeter was established, pairs of UDTs would swim several sounding lines until 1,000 yards of beach had been covered. While one of them remained ashore with a pair of range lights (penlights mounted on five- and three-foot poles) aligned perpendicularly to the beach, the other would swim out taking soundings with a gradient reel along the line of range lights. The UDT on the beach would then move 50 feet and his swimming partner would come back along the newly established line making soundings. All hydrographic data acquired was then reconstructed aboard the *Bass* and

checked against Army maps and hydro-graphic officer charts. As these reconns would be conducted at night, the Special Operations Group tested their new SOP around the beaches of Sasebo Bay and found it to be workable. Welch and Dupras told Rear Adm. Doyle it looked fine to them and got the thumbs-up.

The *Bass* got underway again and sortied to the objective area, an alternate landing site 60 miles south of Inchon located at the head of a relatively constricted bay, with charts indicating a sandbar some two miles from its mouth and one mile from the proposed landing beach. The Special Operations Group timed their arrival on 21 August for shortly before high tide. Though a full moon spotlighted their activities, the reconnaissance went smoothly. The only exciting event occurred when the *Bass* scraped over the sandbar on the way in, almost grounding the ship. Insertion was conducted, with the *Bass* retreating beyond the obstacle while the mission was being completed. Debriefing of the UDT swimmers revealed what all in the group had expected but didn't want to know — the site wasn't suitable for a major landing.

For what would be the final Special Operations Group mission, the *Bass* sailed to another area south of Inchon, a beach adjacent to Kunsan airfield. Again, insertion was timed for just before high tide so the mission could be executed during flood tide, extracting on the ebb.

Following the preliminary swimmer/infrared-scope recon, the go-ahead was given. Major Dupras led the recon Marines in and established a perimeter under a full moon, circumstances he didn't like one bit. He had a hunch about the mission and it wasn't positive.

Range lights were set up as Lt. j.g. Atcheson and other UDT swimmers paired off with their sounding and distance gradient reel gear and set to work. Unknown to everyone, the spot they'd selected was on a long north-south shoreline between a permanent machine-gun emplacement at its center and a troop barracks at its northern end.

About 20 minutes into the operation recon Marine outposts reported armed North Korean soldiers approaching. North Koreans in the machine-gun emplacement had spotted movement on the beach and alerted the barracks. The machine gun and approaching soldiers opened fire. Major Dupras, along with his CP consisting of Marine and UDT radiomen and a Marine staff sergeant, had been moving up and down the beach below its berm in the starlit night. At the first burst of enemy gunfire, however, his staff sergeant stood up, yelled "Everybody down!" and took two automatic weapon's rounds in the stomach. Dupras ordered immediate withdrawal over both radio nets, and with the help of his two RTOs carried his wounded sergeant to an IBS for evacuation. Having heard the gunfire ashore, Kelly Welch brought his LCP in closer to facilitate extraction as Marines and



Lieutenant Atcheson's interpreter Hwang Do-Hyun sights a 57mm recoilless rifle. Major Han Chul-Min (in leather jacket) takes notes. Photo: George Atcheson collection

UDTs piled into their rubber boats and paddled like hell. The retreating craft still provided North Korean gunners with targets, and machine-gun rounds impacting around the boats prompted some UDTs to jump out and take their chances swimming their boats seaward out of enemy range.

Back on the LCP a somewhat confused head count was taken and the landing force returned to the *Bass*. After personnel had off-loaded and the wounded sergeant was taken to the wardroom, an accurate muster was made. Nine Marines missing. Lieutenant Junior Grade Fielding went to Welch and immediately volunteered to take an IBS back in and recover them. In no time Welch and two Marine riflemen were heading back in an LCP; in tow was an IBS carrying Fielding, powerful black UDT operator Fred Morrison at stroke, George Atcheson, UDT E.P. Smith and Lieutenant Phil Shutler.

Fielding maneuvered the IBS to within 150 yards of the hostile beach as rifle and machine-gun fire cracked around them. He and his men found a group of five Marines almost immediately, wading into the surf. While they were returned to the LCP, Fielding and the remaining rescue group searched for the other four. They were soon found and brought safely back. Two of them had been wounded and their rescue was a bit more difficult, but Fielding and his men pulled it off. The stranded Marines seemed to be unperturbed by the whole ordeal, perhaps because all Special Operations Group personnel had been promised that no one would ever be left behind on a hostile shore. They'd retained their rifles and their composure, confident they'd be rescued.

After all hands had returned to the *Bass*, Welch and his men discovered they were short one operator. Before long there was heard a quiet "Ahoj the *Bass*!" from the dark waters below. UDT Mack Boynton, separated from his group in the initial confu-

sion, had swum the two miles from shore. Now it was all hands accounted for.

The following morning, 26 August 1950, the *Bass* rendezvoused with a small flattop, transferred the wounded sergeant aboard for further medical attention, then returned to Sasebo where Special Operations Group officers reported to Rear Adm. Doyle. The upshot of it all is now well-known — no Inchon alternatives. The rest is history. The Special Operations Group had pulled its last mission.

Lieutenants Cashion and Shutler took their amphibious recon platoons and hitched up with 1st Marine Brigade at Pusan. Major Dupras rejoined Amphibious Group One staff for Inchon landing planning. The *Horace A. Bass* with UDT One aboard returned to Naval Base Yokosuka. For its 12-25 August 1950 operations and all it accomplished those two weeks, Special Operations Group was awarded a Navy Unit Commendation. For leading and participating in the rescue mission to recover the nine stranded Marines, Lt. j.g. Ted Fielding earned a Silver Star. And although the Special Operations Group was disbanded, the work was far from over for UDT personnel as they continued executing special operations and their secondary-become-primary mission.

On 27 November 1950 the Chinese communists entered the fray in Korea. That event, 10 weeks after the Inchon landing, forced a redeployment of UN forces and prompted commanders to seriously consider the prospect of conducting a sea evacuation of some forces. UDT One was tasked with reconning likely extraction beaches on a "get data soonest" basis.

Deployed once again on the *Bass*, UDT One personnel were this time faced with a daylight reconnaissance. Following standard insertion SOP, an IBS crew paddled Lt. j.g. Ted Fielding and UDT Gordon Tribble toward the objective. But as it was daylight and the situation forced mission planners not to wait for the tide, Fielding and Tribble ended up sloggng through several

Continued on page 86

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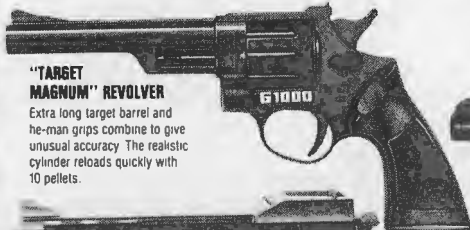
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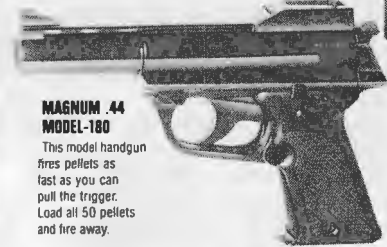
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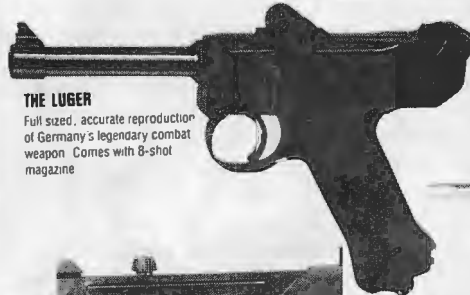
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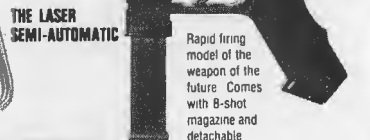
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HK's BASR

Continued from page 35

series, pushing the lever into the forward position will free the firing pin and permit the rifle to be fired. The middle position blocks the striker but allows the bolt to be opened. When placed all the way to the rear, the firing pin remains blocked and the bolt cannot be rotated. There are three gas ports on the right side of the bolt body in the event of a ruptured case. A Mauser-type bolt stop on the receiver prevents unintentional removal of the bolt assembly.

A fully adjustable trigger assembly may be tuned for pull weight and overtravel. Supposedly set at the factory for 4 pounds, ours was a crisp 1¾ pounds. This is far too light for stress scenarios. The H&K BASR boasts the fastest mechanical lock time in the firearms industry — only two milliseconds.

All of this rests in a stock composed of high-density urethane foam-filled Kevlar. Sixteen times stronger than steel by weight, and only half the weight of fiber glass, the Kevlar stock is impervious to cleaning fluids and totally devoid of warpage. A Pachmayr rubber recoil pad is standard, as are quick-detachable sling swivel studs.

At this time, the H&K BASR is offered in calibers .22-250, .22 and 6mm PPC, 7.62x51mm NATO, .30-06 and 300 Win. Magnum. An experimental prototype which permits the user to switch barrels and bolts in the field for conversion from 7.62x51mm to .300 Win. Magnum is presently undergoing test and evaluation. Price is about as modest as the performance capability at \$2,199 complete with hard case and cleaning kit.

All very well, but is it a sniper rifle? Is any target-grade bolt-action rifle suitable for military sniping? The USMC seems to think so. They are still committed to the bolt-action M40. Marine Corps interest in bolt-action designs stems from their experience with these types during World War II and the Korean War. A total of 28,365 Springfield M1903A4 sniper rifles fitted with either Weaver 330 or Lyman Alaskan scopes were produced during WWII. Armed with some of these plus a small quantity of Winchester Model 70 target grade rifles with Unertl 10X Varmint scopes, Marine snipers fought with distinction on the high and rugged ridges of the frozen Chosin.

At the beginning of the Vietnam fracas, Marine snipers had only Winchester Model 70s. Some were eventually equipped with Redfield 3X-9X variable power Accu-Range scopes. In 1966 the Remington Model 700 rifle in caliber 7.62x51mm NATO and the Redfield scope were type classified (officially designated as the M40) for Marine Corps sniper employment. Twenty years later, it still serves, although only the 700 action remains, fitted with a fiber-glass stock, stainless-steel target barrel and special Unertl scope.

The U.S. Army, on the other hand, cast its lot with the M21, essentially a tuned M14 with the Leatherwood ART (Automatic Ranging Telescope) optics and a night vision option. The ability to engage multiple targets in quick succession appeared to be a desirable tradeoff for the reduction in accuracy. I am personally inclined toward semiautomatic sniper rifles. My military background lies almost entirely with semi-auto sniper systems, including most recently in El Salvador where I have watched as communist guerrillas dropped like swatted gnats to Atlacatl snipers — firing with tuned G3s and Leatherwood MPC/ART scopes.

The 7.62x51mm NATO (.308 Winchester) cartridge is an unsatisfactory compromise that has never completely pleased the professional military. Hardly more than the .30-06 projectile seated into a shorter case, it is less powerful than any of the WWII rifle/machine gun rounds, such as its predecessor or the German 7.92mm cartridge, yet far too potent for modern lightweight assault rifles. Its popularity rests almost entirely on the aura of NATO standardization. In its death throes as an infantry rifle round, the 7.62x51mm will never perform in machine guns as well as its forerunners. For long-range sniping it's decidedly outclassed by cartridges such as the .300 Winchester Magnum. However, it's in the NATO pipeline and it makes little sense to introduce another caliber just for sniping at this time. It will outform even the SS109 configuration of the 5.56x45mm cartridge in heavy crosswinds. Armed forces in NATO countries and other free world nations will field sniping systems in caliber 7.62x51mm well into the foreseeable future. We chose to test a BASR in this caliber as it will be the most attractive offering to potential law enforcement and military buyers.

Heckler & Koch requested that we test the BASR rifle using Federal's 308M cartridge which is loaded with the Sierra 168-grain hollowpoint boattail match bullet. Diameters on this projectile are held to .3079 inch to .3080 inch. We were unable to obtain this ammunition in time for our test and evaluation, so Norma's No. 17679 match ammunition was substituted. It closely duplicates the bullet weight, configuration and diameter of the Federal load. Ammunition imported by FFV Norma Inc. (Dept. SOF, 300 South Jefferson, Suite 301, Springfield, MO 65806) has a deservedly high reputation for quality and accuracy.

Five-shot strings were fired at 100 yards off the sturdy portable shooting bench manufactured by Armor Metal Products (Dept. SOF, 2500 Phoenix Ave., Helena, MT 59604). Redfield Precision Sight-In Targets were attached to portable target frames at exactly 100 yards. As instructed, the bore was cleaned with Shooter's Choice after every 15 rounds. For test purposes a Bausch & Lomb 6X-24X variable power scope was attached to the rifle, set to the maximum power rating. Although a fine piece of optics, this scope is far too heavy

and bulky for use on a sniper rifle.

The Arizona desert is a brutal environment in which to test high-performance rifles any time of the year. It's even worse in the summer. We faced the usual severe heat mirage and variable, gusty winds up to 25 mph. Under these conditions you can add a minimum of .2 MOA to any rifle's accuracy potential.

Our group average with this ammunition was .7 MOA. Just subtract .2 for wind drift and heat mirage and you're back to the BASR's guaranteed accuracy of 1/2 MOA. Norma Jaktmatch, an economy cartridge with a 146-grain FMJ projectile, opened up to 1.0 MOA. Several strings were fired with West German surplus ammunition which has performed well in numerous military rifles. Headstamped IWK 19-65 with the NATO cross in a circle, it was manufactured by Industrie Werke Karlsruhe (formerly DWM) in 1965. The lead-cored, boattail bullet weighs 146 grains. The propellant is a round-ball type with a nominal charge weight of 44 grains. It did no better than 1.4 MOA in the BASR.

Firing the ammunition for which it was designed, the BASR will perform up to its specifications. H&K has reportedly obtained consistent sub-inch groups at 500 yards in their .300 Winchester Magnum chambering. It's bolt-action and certainly benchrest quality, but again, is it really a sniper rifle? Not as submitted to me. Screw in either a blackened standard or lightweight barrel with a muzzle brake and fit a detachable box magazine and we're getting closer. Attach a Swarovski ZFM 6x42mm military scope, or the equivalent, and we've marched up to the line. However, with its admitted long-range potential, I believe the twist should be changed, in caliber 7.62x51mm, from one twist in 12 inches to a faster one in 10 inches. Fired from a one-in-12-inch-twist barrel, .308 projectiles will sometimes start to destabilize and keyhole at 1,000 yards. Furthermore, hollowpoint bullets cannot be employed by nations who at least pay lip service to the Hague Convention. For military applications the BASR must be designed to perform with full metal jacketed projectiles.

Those interested in further information about this highly tuned piece of steel and Kevlar should contact Heckler & Koch Inc. (Dept. SOF, 14601 Lee Road, Chantilly, VA 22021). ☒

TAURUS M85

Continued from page 63

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projectile, rather than mere expansion, have plagued this type of ammunition in the past.

Disruptor Exploding Handgun Ammunition as manufactured by FCS Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 13025, Tucson, AZ 85732) is a serious attempt to overcome these problems. Using a jacketed hollowpoint bullet of their own design, a special primer is inserted into the cavity over an unspecified blend of powder. Impact with the target causes the primer to detonate and ignite the powder blend which expands the projectile within the target. Expansion is further assured by six serrations about the hollowpoint's tip.

Tests have been conducted with Disruptor ammunition on media ranging from animal tissue to wood barricades and vehicles. Detonation of the projectile's primer occurred 100 percent of the time. Fragmentation of the projectile occurred only once — in a telephone book. Dense materials, such as wood and car bodies, exhibit the least penetration before detonation. Detonation took place after the Disruptor penetrated 3/4-inch of newly cut pine. It will detonate almost immediately upon impact with a car body due to the high surface tension of the metal. Nevertheless, depending upon the angle of incidence and obstructions behind the door, the expanded Disruptor round will still pass through both doors of most vehicles. Most important were the test results obtained with animal tissue. The average depth of entry prior to detonation

was 2.8 inches when flesh was targeted over bony structure and 4.6 inches over unsupported tissue. Entry wounds were of normal configuration, but internal views of the meat exhibited massive tissue separation and trauma with exit wounds, when they occurred, at least twice the original caliber size.

Disruptor ammunition is available in calibers .380 ACP, .38 Special, .357 Magnum, 9mm Parabellum, .45 ACP and .44 Special. This product is reported to be legal in over 40 states and the suggested retail price is \$14.99 for a package of 10 cartridges. Velocities in all cases are comparable to factory loadings in the respective caliber.

We tested six different types of .38 Special ammunition, including Disruptor ammo, through our Taurus M85 revolver. Peters 158-grain LRN (Lead round-nose) Police Service was chosen for control. This anemic round pedaled downrange with an average velocity of only 739 fps out of the M85's 2-inch barrel. As expected, it's match quality with a standard deviation of only 10 fps. But it just won't do against targets that shoot back.

Two lightweight, high-velocity rounds were tested, S&W and Super Vel, neither of which are in current production. Both featured 110-grain jacketed hollowpoint projectiles (JHP) and they adequately represent that genre. The S&W load had an average velocity of 922 fps and a standard deviation of 30 fps. The Super Vel ammunition was

the fastest tested and raced downrange out of the 2-inch barrel at 1,039 fps with a standard deviation of only 21 fps. Please be advised, however, that remaining stocks of Super Vel are going sour — at least 25 percent have dead primers and should no longer be trusted for serious social purposes.

Hard-cast Keith-Thompson-type 162-grain semiwadcutters (SWC) pushed by 9.5 grains of Hercules 2400 averaged 867 fps with a standard deviation of 43 and no evidence of leading. More than a decade ago, before the introduction of many special-purpose bullets, I frequently loaded the Speer 148-grain hollow-base wadcutter backward (with the hollow cavity to the front) with five grains of Unique. It still offers excellent expansion, although you can expect occasional keyholing past 25 feet and 15 minutes with a Lewis Lead Remover. These reloads drove out of the M85 at 892 fps with a standard deviation of 53 fps.

The Disruptor .38/.357 Magnum bullet has a nominal weight of 119 grains. In .38 Special the propellant charge is seven grains of Hercules Unique. While this ammunition averaged 859 fps out of the M85, the extreme spread was 237 fps which resulted in an unacceptable standard deviation of 79 fps. Dillon progressive loaders, both the superb RL550 and commercial RL1000, are used to produce this ammunition. Extruded IMR and round flake propellants like Unique will not meter consistently through progres-

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sive reloading equipment. On my recommendation, FCS has now incorporated DuPont's Hi-Skor 700X double-base powder into their .38 Special loading. It runs like water through the Dillon powder measure. Prototype Disruptor .38 Special ammunition sent to us for testing was in need of a heavier crimp as the recoil impulse would occasionally drive bullets far enough out of the case to bind up the cylinder's rotation. This situation has also been corrected.

The M85's squarebutt target stocks helped moderate felt recoil to an acceptable level with even the stiffest of loads. Target reacquisition for subsequent shots was consequently very fast. These are without doubt the best grips I've ever used on a small pocket revolver.

Accuracy testing was conducted at a range of 21 feet, a realistic distance for the most probable scenario involving a belly gun. Lead round-nose police service ammunition will dump the entire five-shot cylinder into a 1-inch group with boring regularity when fired offhand using a modified Weaver stance. Most surprising was the Disruptor ammunition. Handicapped with velocities so erratic the varying recoil impulses could be felt by the shooters, the Disruptor still placed five rounds into 1.5 inches almost every time.

Disruptor exploding ammunition and the stainless-steel bull from Brazil are a nasty combination in a small, concealable package. Taurus' M85 revolver is every bit the

match and master of its U.S. look-alike and considerably less expensive. Those who like to pack small wheelguns in hidden places should contact Taurus International Manufacturing Inc. (Dept. SOF, 4563 SW 71st Avenue, P.O. Box 558567, Ludlam Branch, Miami, FL 33155) for further information. ✕

AFGHAN ATTACK

Continued from page 53

muj let this go, then fired RPG rockets at the following APC, two supply trucks and a tank. All the rockets missed, the final shot at a tank being a misfire. Lech thought the rockets were too old, probably of Korean War vintage. He opened up with his .303 Lee-Enfield but the range was too long, the muj position too far away, they being "afraid of the stronger Soviet firepower."

Another time, Lech and his comrades had a close call when the village they were staying in — somewhere between Baraki and the southern town of Churkh — was surrounded one morning by a large tank force and buzzed by three Mi-24 Hind choppers.

"They were trying to locate us by chopper, then squeeze us by tank," Lech told me, "but we hid in the trees and bushes till

dark. The tanks did not enter the village, nor soldiers. They were not sure how strong we were."

They escaped to the safety of mountain villages, holing up for a few days, then returned to their village. Lech's commander wanted to take him into Baraki so he could see the evidence of the Soviet occupation. I asked Lech if there were Soviets in Baraki.

"Only dead ones," he said with a grim smile. "The Russians got pushed out. The ones that were too slow — they stayed!"

Baraki had been bombarded by rocket and shell with such intensity that the mujahideen had been forced to pull out in order to prevent the complete destruction of their town, and what wasn't blown up was carried away as booty by the Russians.

"They looted much of the town, from some shops they took everything — in fact they created communism in one day," recounted Lech with dry sarcasm. "I was feeling like I was in Poland, where under communism the shelves in the shops are always empty!"

Then it was back to his village where an incident took place that forced Lech to return to Pakistan. He was giving instruction in self-defense against a knife attack using his own personally razor-honed Gerber blade as the weapon. "What I was trying to suggest to the muj was the nighttime advantage of a silent weapon," he said.



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By Afghan standards Lech was a progressive in the school of psychological and commando warfare. But on this occasion — and Lech bashfully admitted he was overstepping the limits of his own training — a left-handed mujahid took him by surprise, accidentally slicing his right arm open like a melon and severing a tendon to boot.

It was a long and painful trek back to Pakistan, tribute in itself to the man's determination and guts, where an Afghan doctor sewed him back together.

And so it was that we met in Peshawar. Lech was dressed flamboyantly as usual in camo garb and bush hat with a pre-Soviet Polish army insignia (a symbol today of all Polish independence movements both inside and outside Poland, according to Lech) and his right arm in a cast supported by a leather belt.

After a few weeks I split for Quetta, hoping to get across the border into Kandahar. Lech said he might see me down that way, as he had plans to move as soon as his wounds had knit. I never saw him again, though I'm told he did make it south.

In May 1985, Lech headed north to Chitral and then into Nuristan, not a province of Afghanistan, but nevertheless a very distinct region situated in the northeast bordering Pakistan's North West Frontier Province. Nuristan is characterized by extensive forests and crazy indigenous locals, and by mountains. Lying

within the confines of the mighty Hindu Kush range, Nuristan has been accurately described as a natural mountain fortress. And Lech loved mountains. Climbing them was his sport.

Moreover, being relatively isolated and protected from the ravages of the war going on elsewhere, Lech thought this would be an ideal place to train small units of mujahideen in basic military skills. After his own experiences fighting alongside the muj, he knew they needed it.

Accompanied by three other foreigners, two Italian ex-commandos and one ex-Danish army soldier, Lech established the nucleus of what he called his "Europeans Expert Group." This operated under the patronage of Khalillullah Nuristani, the Chitral-based leader of the Nuristan resistance party — the Islamic Revolutionary State of Afghanistan.

Then came the fateful day on 4 July 1985. With his usual exuberance Lech went off to scale a mountain face, apparently alone, just for the sheer hell of it. Perhaps, as he sometimes did, he pushed himself beyond his normal limits. Or maybe it was because his right arm was still weak and not up to the rigors of severe rock climbing. Whatever the cause, Lech fell to his death.

Of course there were ugly rumors. People suspected foul play. Perhaps he'd been hit by a KHAD agent (the Afghan secret police), or perhaps in retaliation by disgruntled mujahideen in some interne-

cine squabble. But none of those rumors were true. Lech's demise was not sullied by foul play. He died in the full glory of what he was: a lone warrior, a champion, a David calling his Goliath to heel.

His death was more than just a personal loss to those of us who knew him. It was a tragedy. We'd lost a comrade who refused to be intimidated or buckle in the face of adversity and daunting odds. Perhaps he was that example we were all secretly trying to emulate, the example we wanted to live up to.

The Afghans loved him, too. I remember him once saying, "When they found I was a good man, they tried to convert me to Islam." That ultimate recognition in the eyes of the mujahideen — that honor — was not accepted by Lech. He wasn't a greatly religious man, and in any case his notoriety with booze and women would have caused a few pious faces to blanch. Even so, in Afghan eyes today, Lech has earned the distinction of *shaheed* (martyred), killed in the jihad, which for Muslims guarantees them a special place in heaven. And as with other *shaheed*, Lech's grave, in a "deep and beautiful Nuristan valley," is visited regularly by Afghans paying homage to their foreign brother.

I remember Lech for his great love of life, even as he courted death. He was a joker in the pack, with an offbeat sense of humor. He wasn't a complex man; his ideas were simple, to some minds even

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naive — like equipping the muj with missile-mounted snowmobiles for winter commando raids — but he was sincere as well as entertaining.

As far as I can ascertain Lech never did kill any Russians, as was his fervent wish, but at least he put his hand where his mouth was and went to bat. He may not have hit a home run, but I believe he made more than first base. I can't say it any better than Lech himself, who told me one day: "If you have an enemy, it doesn't matter if you kick him in the head or in the balls — just as long as it hurts!"

INSIDE KANDAHAR CITY

Kandahar is a city under siege, but ironically it's the Soviet invaders and Afghan army troops who are at the disadvantage. Scattered throughout the city are about 30 army posts — some once schools and hotels, all bearing the scars of constant battle — to which the Afghan soldiers are confined. They also have a large base, referred to as the "Firka," in the north of the city. An estimated 30,000 Russians are concentrated at the airport about 12 kilometers southeast of the city.

Soviets only come into the city to resupply the outposts, and then it's in large numbers of troops supported by many tanks and APCs. At such times the mujahideen find it expedient to melt away into the back streets.

During the daytime the mujahideen control perhaps half of the city, such as the bazaar areas I visited, and it's not normal for government patrols to work that area. Elsewhere Afghan army forces hold greater sway, and periodically enter the bazaars to round up conscripts for the army. I was told the official age is 19-39 years but the army will snatch boys as young as 15. You rarely see young men in the bazaars, just the elderly.

At night the city becomes mujahideen turf. Every night I was there the sky was illuminated with tracer indicating an attack on some post.

Though somewhere in the city the sounds of shooting could always be heard during my visits, on the surface the situation appeared quite normal. Chemists and barbershops were open for business, and you could buy fresh bread, meat and yogurt; children ran and played ball among the fat-tailed sheep tethered for sale; men with push carts hawked vegetables and fruit; and men lounged in tea shops sipping glasses of sweet tea while others smoked hashish. (Although drugs are readily available here I never once saw any muj using them. "Hashish haram!" — forbidden — they said.)

Mercedes-Benz buses — I saw one with the logo "Harry Tyrol Tours" — trundle the streets providing local and provincial services. There is a twice-weekly bus from Kandahar to both Kabul and Herat, and the 385-kilometer trip to Kabul costs

about 200 Afghanis (about U.S. \$1.70). Only children and the aged travel, however, because young men face the danger of conscription.

In January 1985 Babrak Karmal reportedly announced that military service would be reduced from three years to two, but this did not impress any Afghans. They dismiss Radio Kabul as all lies — "Communists tell lies . . . always lies!" — and the mention of Babrak Karmal's name would invariably be accompanied by a contemptuous spit against the wall.

There is no postal service in Kandahar except for military use. You also won't find electricity or cinemas — the mujahideen have cut the former and banned the latter. The muj also control the prices of all foodstuffs and other essentials, with marginal concessions for themselves. For example, 50 kilograms (110 pounds) of sugar costs 3,000 Afs (U.S. \$25) for the public and only 2,600 Afs for the muj. Likewise, one kilogram (2.2 pounds) of green tea runs 800/640 Afs and one liter of petrol 50/40 Afs.

But it's not all a bed of roses; the harsher realities of city life were obvious every time you turned a corner, or looked into the faces of the people. Most of the shops and houses in Kandahar I saw were deserted and many reduced to rubble, the result of indiscriminate Soviet bombardment. Many of the surrounding villages are completely destroyed from deliberate Soviet attrition bombing. An ex-mayor of Kanda-

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har whom I met estimated the present city population at no more than 10,000-20,000, down from a previous high of 150,000 in his time. The people have simply fled to Pakistan as refugees. ✕

OLD FOES, NEW TACTICS

Continued from page 43

tional warfare tactics. Overemphasis will cost them their natural advantage as guerrilla fighters, they say, and make them more vulnerable to superior firepower of the Soviets, who can afford the loss of far more men and equipment than the resistance. History supports these critics to a degree. During Vietnam's 1968 Tet Offensive, in Cuba and in Greece, communist guerrillas who reverted to conventional tactics lost heavily. But conventional tactics have worked to a limited extent for the Afghan freedom fighters when employed as a surprise element under limited geographic conditions unfavorable to the enemy. The costs still have been high.

Scorched Earth Continues

The border campaigns were not the only offensives in 1985. The Helmand Valley in southern Afghanistan, west of Kandahar, was surprisingly intact after years of Soviet attacks on agriculture. No doubt Soviet commanders studied the valley campaign from another war, the Shenandoah in 1864, when U.S. Army General Phil Sheridan said, "I want it [so] that a crow flying over this valley will have to carry his own rations."

The Helmand Valley is one of Afghanistan's most fertile breadbaskets, its irrigation made possible by a large dam built with U.S. aid in the 1950s. The resistance there is fairly well organized, basically run by graduates of the same *madrassa* (seminary). What they lack is the degree of combat experience seen among freedom fighters in Kunar or Paktia.

But this did not stop the Helmand Valley guerrillas from taking the initiative in May 1985, attacking DRA outposts near the dam. The Soviets reacted with a large combined arms offensive. In June, the invaders intensified their scorched-earth policy. The guerrillas in the Helmand, without combat experience, were unable to stand up to the Soviets effectively.

In other areas, the freedom fighters continue to prove their ability to operate in largely depopulated and defoliated areas, such as Jagdalak, Gandamak and Koh-i-Safi, all within striking range of Kabul. And the Soviets keep trying to depopulate other areas, routing out local guerrillas. Depopulation and destruction of agriculture was seen in the Logar and Laghman offensives, which appeared to be even more destructive to civilians than in the past. With a more secure Soviet perimeter around Kabul, it will be more difficult for

supporters to smuggle food from the capital's bazaar to guerrillas in these devastated areas.

In Afghanistan's interior, the Panjsher Valley remains the most significant guerrilla stronghold. The Soviet Panjsher IX offensive of 1985 differed from those of previous years because it had more limited aims. It was not intended to clear out the valley, nor was it undertaken as a response to Panjsheri attacks on the Salang Pass highway. It was intended instead as a quick response to the fall of Pechgour, and it left Massoud's control of the floor of the main valley improved.

The Soviet Panjsher IX offensive also differed because Afghan communist government troops were used for much of the action. The patriots understandably fight against these native soldiers — seen by the resistance as traitors — with a special ferocity. Elements of the DRA's 444th Commando Brigade parachuted into the valley. Presumably the Soviets had all the helicopters fully employed elsewhere. The "Triple Four" was cut to pieces by Massoud's mujahideen. It was during the end of this offensive that Charles Thornton, on assignment for the *Arizona Republic*, was killed. The convoy he was traveling with was attacked at night by Hind gunships.

Return Ticket

Visiting a war must never be equated with fighting a war. Talking to the mujahideen with a return ticket to the land of the Big PX in your pocket sets you apart from them more than language or culture. Yet, the mujahideen are fighting because it is a jihad, a holy war, not because they are compelled to fight. The resistance has no conscription. There are no guerrilla draft boards. To fight in such a war is, to Muslims, an obligation to God as well as homeland.

But those not fighting are not considered slackers. Most refugee camps have their share of fit young men. Some — by no means all — are guerrillas visiting the family. Much of this is due to the nature of support for the resistance. For each Afghan fighting inside the country, there are perhaps 10 others trying to grow crops or just trying to live.

But for Afghanistan's valiant patriots struggling to free their country from the jackboot of Soviet oppression, whether the Afghans are in their own ravaged country or the squalid hovels of their refugee camps, just trying to live is a relentless, soul-grIPPING challenge. ✕

I WAS THERE

Continued from page 24

had more powerful *ju-ju*.

My company sergeant major, a black African soldier of the highest quality, was my mentor and I relied on

him heavily, especially when it came to African matters. He knew the importance of my trophy and ordered that the arm be nailed to a specific tree. Those of us who knew about the incident kept mum, uncertain of the legality of my action. Stories abounded in the officers' mess and we wondered what effect the decaying snake arm was having on the others. But the Africans knew that an affair involving *ju-ju* was better left unmentioned.

This didn't stop other thief-men gangs from operating, but they certainly moved on to easier strikes. The troops took good heart at the mortal symbolism of the arm, realizing that it belonged to a man, not a phantom. The new white chief had good medicine and his *ju-ju* was potent. My look was lightning and my word thunder; my *ju-ju* was strong and remained so.

Do I believe in *ju-ju*? It worked for me and I think it still does. But that's another story. ✂

SUBWAY SUBTERFUGE

Continued from page 37

have witnessed might clarify these points.

It was about midnight, the train was full but not crowded, when it pulled into the elevated station and the doors opened. And stayed open. Two, maybe three cars back, came yells, curses and screams. Somebody else yelled for him to get out of the door so we could be on our way. Then gun shots. One, two, three. Everybody in the entire train hit the deck. The doors closed. More shots. One, two, three. You knew what was happening without even seeing it. The guys doing the yelling started shooting at the doorholders, who promptly jumped out and when the doors were safely closed, shot back.

The train pulled out of the station. At the next stop, everybody piled out. A woman dropped over, fainting. Two guys, one with a gun in his belt, jumped over and pushed their way through the people, up the stairs and away into the night.

We all got back on the train. The police got on at the next station. A search was made, nothing was found. Questions were asked, but even in the car where it happened, nobody saw nothin'.

Another time, a different train. The train pulled into a midtown station in mid-afternoon at August. The windows were open. A woman got on and sat down across from me beneath an open window. Looking at her, I thought to myself, she should have a great big "T" for Tourist tattooed on her forehead. She was actually reading the graffiti on the walls as if it were the Declaration of Independence, and she had plenty of gold around her neck and on her hands.



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The doors closed and the train lurched forward. Suddenly, a long skinny arm snaked through the window, and before I could open my mouth, much less move, a hand grabbed a fistful of gold chain and yanked.

The woman was throttled by her own jewelry and was jerked halfway out of her seat as the train picked up speed and the hand tightened its grip on the gold. Another yank and the chains snapped and disappeared out the window. The train entered a tunnel and the woman started to scream.

The whole incident took two or three seconds. It would be exactly eight minutes to the next station. By that time, the gold would have already been sold.

It was into this type of environment that the Transit Authority Police threw its Decoy Unit. Previous decoy operations usually involved setting up a police officer dressed as a derelict with a dollar or two sticking out of his pocket. This, too, was only marginally successful. In the first case, the only people they caught were the ones desperate enough to rob a derelict, and when they got to court, it was judged as petty theft. For the returns, it was also dangerous. In one particular instance, a decoy cop had his throat cut. His back-up was in radio but not visual contact.

The Transit Authority took a different tack. Screening several hundred volunteers, the 24 men and women selected would operate in four-man teams, never out of sight of one another. The "victims" would be well-dressed, or at least be sporting valuables flashy enough to net a charge of grand larceny when the case went before the judge. It also attracted a better, more professional type of criminal. And it worked.

They knew it worked because arrests were being made, grand theft charges were sticking in court and the ACLU started flapping its wings, screaming "Entrapment." The Transit Authority countered the charge with the simple fact that if it wasn't a cop getting robbed, it would have been a civilian and went on making arrests. They changed scenarios, disguises, hours of operation and routine to adjust and fit situations that statistics told them needed attention. And it went on working.

It takes a special kind of a cop to do this kind of work. You have to be part actor, playing an assigned role, either as a victim or back-up three or four feet away without a flinch while the crime goes down before you can move. You have to be cool under pressure, exhibiting steel nerve, the kind of nerve it takes to continue to "sleep" while two punks stand over you, their belt buckles not six inches from your face, their legs touching yours, their hands going through your pockets, and listen while one guy cuts the chains from around your throat with a straight razor. But whatever you do, don't move.

It was perhaps a month after I rode with the unit that I was on my way home from a job in the early hours of the morning, my cameras at my feet and around my neck. I was tired and wanted to sleep, but I

couldn't. The train pulled into a station, and I saw them through the window as we came to a stop. They saw me, too. Two of them, together. I watched them as they got aboard, wearing the uniform of the urban punk: high-top Felony Flyers (Adidas, maybe Keds), clean jeans, quilted down jackets and ski hats. They spotted me, did a once-over on the equipment, and all of a sudden they split up. They sat across from me, one to my left and one to my right. I looked at them briefly, put my right hand in my coat pocket, wrapped my hand around my .380, and went back to reading my book. No one moved for the 15 minutes we rode that way until I got to my stop. I got up, and without taking my hand from my pocket, I walked out of the car as they followed me with their eyes. As the doors closed behind me and the train pulled out of the station, I saw them again. This time they were sitting together.

Then it hit me. Cops? Maybe. No, it couldn't be. But then remembering some of the tactics I saw the decoy unit using, I couldn't really tell, could I? ✕

WATERBORNE MERCUS

Continued from page 61

troops were nearly surprised on the beach by a daylight enemy patrol but managed to repel the rebels with no losses of their own. Hoare then commandeered two larger local native fishing boats for his raiders to mount the attack, only to find his airfield objective deserted. Combing the area, they were again surprised by the rebels and lost two men in a vicious firefight before retreating to the boats and returning south along the lake to safety.

This first frustrated attempt at amphibious assault was instructive for Hoare who later developed a second plan to end the rebel hold in the Baraka area and to prevent their resupply from Tanzanian sources across the lake. Hoare's plan conceived of coordinated naval and ground assaults supported by air strikes and covered by a clever deception scheme. For this maneuver, code-named "Operation Banzi," Hoare mobilized his entire fleet of combatants and enlisted the aid of the Belgian-run lake navigation company. He required transportation for at least 200 men with 18 vehicles and was able to obtain four additional commercial ships consisting of the lake steamer *Urundi*, the tug *Ulindi*, the *Uvira* (a long barge to carry 12 trucks and a Ferret scout car), and the flat-top barge *Crabbe* to carry six jeeps.

As he began his detailed planning phase, Hoare developed a scheme to cover his amphibious assault with evidence of an overland advance along a different axis. To do this, he allowed plans for such a march to leak, stamped, "TOP SECRET OPERATION WINGATE." Within a week, the

story of a mercenary strike over the mountain began to circulate and Hoare proceeded with his plans to attack from the lake.

Loading under cover of darkness, the force slipped out of the tiny port of Kabimba to give credence to their deception scheme. To conserve fuel, the tugs towed the barges and the Ermans towed the six Swift boats. At first light the next day, Hoare was in position and after coordinated airstrikes by Hoare's Cuban mercenary fighter-bombers, a seven-man beach reconnaissance party was sent ashore. Though some problems developed with weather and signaling, Hoare's troops were ashore within 45 minutes and the jeeps unloaded quickly thereafter. Accurate fire from the city heights initially pinned the force down but the backup firepower from the gunboat and cannon mounted on the barge soon eliminated the rebel position. Hoare was able to take Baraka and his navy effectively prevented further rebel resupply across the lake.

Covert Action

A third type of naval operation for which a mercenary force is well-suited is the marine commando raid using a tailored force against a specific objective. Such operations have been as sharply focused as the liberation of a single prisoner and as grandly scaled as a *coup d'état*.

One small-scale action may have been directly coordinated by Jean Schramme to support his 1967 power struggle against the Mobutu government. By freeing his ally, former Katangan Interior Minister Munongo, from the prison on Boula Bela Island in the Congo River near Leopoldville (Kinshasa), Schramme may have hoped to send a "psychological shock" through the Congo and rally support for his move for power.

With a force of 13 mercenaries under Georgio Norbiato, a commando group was equipped with five Zodiak boats and armament for a night assault. Unfortunately, they had been delayed in arrival by bad weather after two uncomfortable days in an unstable trawler and the group had difficulty in adjusting their bearings quickly once released from the mother ship. Early in the approach to the island, they were caught in a spotlight followed by machine-gun fire forcing them to withdraw and leaving Schramme to conclude that "the commando was expected."

Turning to the seven major coup attempts by mercenary forces in Africa since 1970, it is striking to note the geographic peculiarities which all of these countries share. All of the affected nations are small with open oceanic coastline on which the capital and principal cities are located. This combination of small size, open coastline and concentrated authority facilitates the rapid entry and movement of any armed force that could be in reach of the center of power (capital, presidential palace, etc.) within a short span of time. By the same token, the reaction time for defense forces is cut considerably and the lack of extensive coastal surveillance assets in any of these nations made early detection and warning unlikely.

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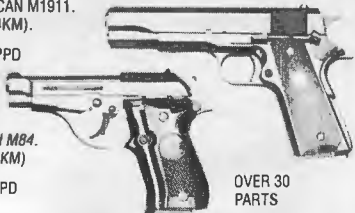
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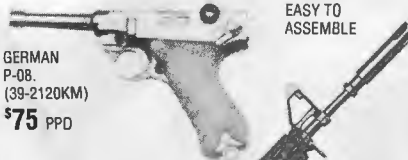
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Another important common factor among these nations is the type and style of government in power. With a single, authoritarian leader who controlled the military directly, these nations were highly susceptible to any type of plot which had this individual as its objective. In the absence of any tested system for orderly succession, simply by removing the chief of government, the government would be removed.

Behind these governments were military forces that were small, poorly trained, ill-equipped and totally unprepared to deal with a surprise assault by well-armed and coordinated foreign troops. For example, when France-Albert René took power from the absent James Mancham in the 1977 "coup of the 66 rifles" in the Seychelles, the 66 rifles belonged to Tanzanian auxiliary troops that had been placed at his disposal. Thus, action by a well-armed and directed force, however small, can indeed pose a credible threat to nations such as these.

As a factor of geography, mercenary coup attempts in modern Africa have been based on either air or sea assaults and it is significant that the only two successes were naval operations.

The first successful seaborne assaults were actually two different coups, each carried out by mercenary leader Robert Denard in the Comoro Islands. In 1975, the Comoros unilaterally declared independence, naming Ahmed Abdullah as president. This abrupt end to 132 years of French rule in the strategic oil lanes did not agree with elements in France that may even have included high figures in the foreign office and intelligence services. The following month, Denard and seven mercenaries waded ashore by the presidential palace, arrested Abdullah and installed Ali Solih in his place. Denard, a Congo alumnus, remained for three months to train the new local army and then returned to France.

Shortly thereafter, Solih began a drift toward a form of Chinese revolution including a Red Guard approach to administration in which all records were destroyed and government bureaus were turned over to illiterate teenagers. French aid was withdrawn and former President Abdullah, in Paris exile, approached Denard offering a \$1,500,000 partnership deal in March 1977. Once French government non-opposition was assured, Denard assembled a team of 45 mercenaries with military experience and appropriate rightist political leanings.

His plan was to repeat his earlier success and he contracted a large trawler and three Zodiak and Sillinger inflatable assault boats. Based on his Congo lessons, he knew the native fear of loud noises and so chose shotguns and elephant guns as his armament, both having the additional advantage of being legal for export. After two months' sailing with an intermediate stop in the Canaries to pick up the remainder of his force, he arrived off the palace at Moroni. Between the hours of 0200 and 0400 on 14

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May 1978, he paddled ashore, captured Solih and secured victory. Only light resistance was encountered and the mercenaries were greeted as national heroes. In fact, most, including Denard, remained to set up lucrative business or to lead the army and militia units. Denard himself remained as army commander in chief until forced out by pressure from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) later in the year.

Denard's effectiveness can be attributed to a combination of several factors that were not present in the other forces. First, he was obviously well-financed, enjoyed at least the tacit complicity of the major power interest (France) and was backed by two native leaders who could reasonably expect popular support. His military objectives were limited within the force available and his equipment was composed of common items which would not arouse the suspicions of local authorities encountered en route. Finally, his men were well-trained and disciplined and responded with decisiveness and initiative in the field.

This was a lesson which the venerable Michael Hoare was to learn painfully at Point Larue airport in November 1981, when a nervous young mercenary entered the wrong customs channel and an alert inspector uncovered his secreted AKM. Had Hoare chosen a more surreptitious sea entry to the Seychelles Islands and more common armament instead of commercial aviation and unmistakable automatic weapons, the banner headlines might have

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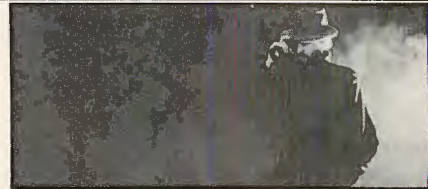
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announced another successful mercenary coup instead of a disastrous rout.

Nevertheless, Hoare's actions rocked the leftist René regime which had itself come to power with the backing of only a handful of soldiers. Well aware of his islands' vulnerability to sea-based infiltration, it is significant that following an abortive army coup and renewed rumors of other plots since the fall of 1982, René has received visible support from the Soviet Union in the form of extended port visits by warships from the Soviet Indian Ocean Squadron (SOVINDRON).

As rumors persist of continued plots along the African littoral, one need not look far from American shores to find states equally susceptible to naval mercenary action. While it may yet be some time before mercenary craft ply the rivers and lakes of El Salvador and Nicaragua or a coup strike force wades ashore in Guyana, there are parallel forces at work in many countries of Central and South America like those which gave rise to mercenary actions in modern Africa.

As we have seen, the sailor of fortune is not a comical anachronism from the days of the Jolly Roger; he is an active instrument for political change in the contemporary world. Well-trained, properly equipped and directed, the modern naval mercenary can have a profound effect on the political landscape and directly influence the balance of power in a nation or an entire regional theater. He is a force to be taken seriously.

The views herein are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Navy or Department of Defense. ✕

UDTs IN KOREA

Continued from page 73

hundred yards of mud. Gaining the beach, they stood and stared up a big bluff commanding the seaward approaches. It didn't take binoculars to see that it bristled with machine-gun nests, emplacements and trenches, some freshly dug. But, as Fielding recalls: "The most important fact was that whatever troops had been manning them had since departed, leaving no forwarding address." So much for that evacuation beach site; the NKs could be back the next day to fill their vacant holes.

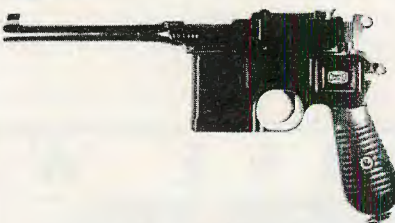
Later, in 1951, newly promoted Lt. Ted Fielding led a UDT detachment attached to the Royal Navy. Their mission was to recon the Han River estuary and ascertain whether a British destroyer could maneuver in those restricted waters and into a channel that went around the area far enough to provide naval gunfire support to vulnerable positions, should ongoing Panmunjom peace talks fail.

For this operation the *Bass* would play the role of Brit destroyer while Fielding and the others went ashore to collect hydrographic data and recon the area. After waiting for



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high tide, the *Bass* was able to make a long inland penetration of the Han River estuary region. Having made their maximum advance on the *Bass*, Fielding led his detachment ashore via standard insertion SOP. While on the beach gathering data they happened to notice two Korean children, boy and girl, outside a nearby village. They were waving at the UDTs, smiling and acting friendly. Fielding ordered his men to stay away from the kids, who once again beckoned from beside the haystack where they stood.

At that moment the detachment's corpsman yelled to Fielding, "Hey, that haystack just moved!" and Fielding shouted "Drop!" Simultaneously, the haystack machine-gun nest erupted with gunfire. From cover, Lt. Fielding radioed for naval gunfire support from the *Bass*' five-inchers, its first salvo demolishing the machine-gun nest. The UDTs then withdrew with some minor casualties. Extraction, however, covered about twice the distance as insertion because the *Bass* had to cope with ebb tide, retreating to stay in waters deep enough to float her.

In late 1951, just before his return stateside, Lt. Fielding volunteered for individual assignment to the British 41 Royal Marine Commandos to serve as recon scout for three demolition raids against east coast rail targets located north of Hamhung.

UDTs and Royal Marine Commandos

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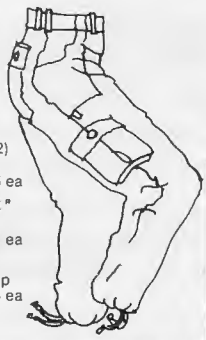
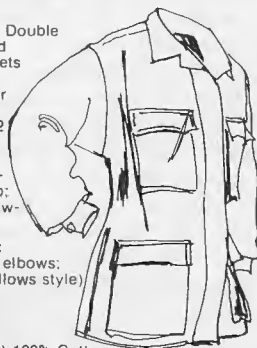
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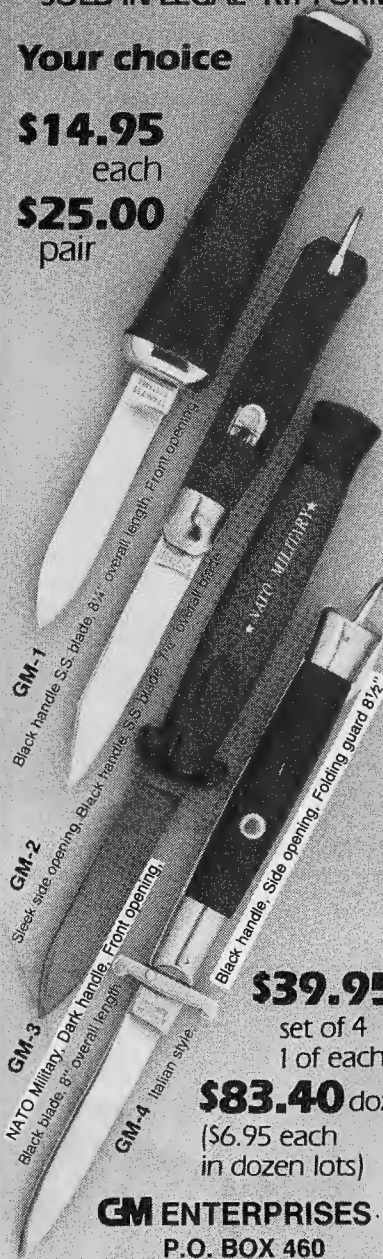
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had previously worked together during several demo raids conducted three weeks after Inchon (during which Fielding had earned a Bronze Star as assault-force guide). After training the commandos, Lt. E.P. Smith and Phil Wilson of UDT One executed pre-assault recons before leading them ashore. Launching from APDs *Bass* and *Wantuck*, the 120 commandos, during night operations on 7-8 October, destroyed railroad bridges and tunnels 16 miles south of Kyong Song and four miles south of Songjin.

For his mission with 41 Royal Marine Commandos, Lt. Fielding once again found himself aboard the *Bass* as the raiders sorted to the target area. On a cold 2 December 1951, Fielding, clad in a green rubberized hooded suit, climbed into the front seat of a commando kayak. Behind him at stroke sat Sergeant Major Dodds, holder of the European 24-hour kayak distance paddling record.

The pair headed shoreward into the night. Around 700 yards offshore Fielding began his recon swim to the targets: two bridges and a railroad tunnel. Intel data gathered, he swam back to the kayak. After returning to the command LCP, Fielding reported that their intelligence had been wrong; targets supposedly at sea level were actually 30 feet above the water line.

Lieutenant Colonel Grant, Commando CO, considered the situation and then sent his men in. As commandos made their way up to the bridge targets, ChiCom troops suddenly appeared out of the railroad tunnel on a handcar mounted with machine guns. From their superior vantage point they poured fire over the landing force. Following a brief firefight which resulted in several casualties Lt. Col. Grant ordered a withdrawal. On the beach, as the commandos quit firing and boarded their rubber boats, the ChiComs also ceased firing. For no apparent reason, the sitting ducks retreating in the IBS drew no fire from the Chinese.

The next night's target was just up the coast from the previous location. Again, Sgt. Maj. Dodds piloted the kayak and Fielding plunged into the cold waters for another reconnaissance. Back on board the command LCP he reported that this time the situation was reversed. Though intel data said their target bridge was 30 feet above sea level, it was actually at the water line. As before, Lt. Col. Grant sent his men in.

Fielding, accompanying Grant in the command LCP during the insertion, later said, "The bridge was well-defended and they were waiting for us, perhaps alerted by our previous night's mission." Even as the commandos landed they found themselves engaged in a nasty firefight that inflicted 50-percent casualties in no time. Grant ordered an immediate withdrawal.

The abortive raid left about 1,000 pounds of unused C-3 aboard the command LCP. Fielding thought it would be a shame to let it go to waste, so he and Sgt. Maj. Dodds went to Grant and got his permission to rig a couple of 60-pound charges for a quick-hit raid against a bridge 1,000 yards down the

coast. The demo packs were to be rigged with 60-second fuzes to be left behind as surprise packages for curious enemy troops.

After maneuvering into position the LCP headed in toward the target. Fielding was in the bow, crouched "in an Olympic runner's stance." Behind him was Dodds. The craft hit the beach, the ramp went down and Fielding charged ahead, only to find himself nose deep in water. The "beach" was actually a sandbar off the coast. Stunned surprise reigned until a practically helpless Fielding, weighted down by the 60-pound charge, yelled for help. Pulled back aboard, he, Dodd and the others regrouped, checked the charges and reset the fuzes. But as the craft maneuvered off the sandbar, it hit another one nearby. The jolt knocked one of the demo packs, fuze pulled in the process, overboard. Without hesitation, Fielding dove overboard to retrieve it, with Lt. Col. Grant yelling "I cannot wait for you!" Under the dark, cold waters Lt. Fielding managed to defuse and retrieve the pack.

"I surfaced and flipped myself aboard in true UDT style, spraining my ankle in the process. Colonel Grant offered me a drink from his bottle of scotch and asked if I wanted to continue the mission. After taking a swig I replied, 'No, I promised my wife I'd never take any unnecessary chances.'" Lieutenant Ted Fielding was later awarded the Navy Cross and the British Distinguished Service Cross for his selfless actions that day.

Although these demo raids weren't successful, they did tie down enemy troops to positions on the coast because of earlier successes. UDTs in Korea also accomplished the other half of their secondary/primary mission — the insertion/extraction of agents and guerrillas, a mission that found them working for the fledgling Central Intelligence Agency.

The CIA's Korean operations were headed by Hans V. Tofte, a Danish-born WWII OSS veteran who'd earned the Legion of Merit as a major running the highly efficient trans-Adriatic supply effort which kept Tito's partisans going with arms, munitions and fuel. His job in Korea centered on establishing an escape and evasion operation. The plan called for use of islands off Korea's east and west coasts, above the 38th parallel, as E&E destinations for downed airmen while establishing a section across the peninsula manned with trained guerrillas working from fixed inland positions to serve as guides.

Lieutenant George Atcheson had arrived at Inchon with his UDT Three Detachment two days after the landing to serve as a back-up unit, rejoining the rest of Team Three since deployed from NAB Coronado. While still at Inchon, Commander of the Navy, Far East, Admiral C. Turner Joy, issued a directive that an officer with rubber boat experience be sent to Japan for temporary training duty. Atcheson found himself being nominated for the job.

"I eventually found my way to Camp Drake, some distance north of Tokyo.

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"Han had gained a certain fame in the ROK for his exploits during the first days of the war. His being something of a maverick by nature might have been a prime factor in his recruitment by Tofte.

"In spite of my having been 'volunteered' as a rubber boat trainer, no instruction was scheduled or even contemplated in those early days of the E&E program as the 'troops' had never even had basic training. So while the Korean NCOs taught close-order drill and disassembly of the M1 Carbine, I and the several other American trainers taught map reading, compass use and other subjects for which we were not especially well-prepared. On several occasions I took groups up to an abandoned artillery range in the mountains near Maebashi where we constructed a combat firing course and had a lot of target practice and grenade throwing. It was another indication of the confused times. There I was, a UDT operator, doing something quite out of my line of work.

"The training curriculum, which included vital clandestine communications, lasted about a month. I was then told to take the ROK guerrillas to Seoul and turn them over to a certain USAF intelligence officer, which I did. What became of most of them I never knew, although I ran into some of them later on. The bulk of them probably formed a cadre for Tofte's E&E program."

Following his stint with the E&E program, Acheson returned to Team Three for other duties. In the interim, another UDT Three operator, Lt. j.g. Dave Gleckler, had been tapped for CIA duty.

During the spring and summer of 1951 he became the primary rubber boat trainer under Tofte's operations chief, Marine Corps Major Vincent "Dutch" Kramer. Aside from duty as an IBS instructor, Gleckler and a few other UDTs assigned to the E&E program trained guerrilla volunteers in demolitions and basic reconnaissance skills while Maj. Kramer and others taught them mortars and survival skills.

Lieutenant Junior Grade Gleckler was OIC for several missions to insert U.S.-trained guerrillas tasked with inland E&E duty.

"Operating from the APD 127 *Begor*, we arrived at the target area. Our recon swimmer went in first to scout the area, but during the swimming insertion missed the correct landing area. We waited about a half-mile offshore — six rubber boats fully loaded with ROK guerrillas — in vain for his signal to proceed. It was about 0230, and as OIC I knew I had to decide whether to move in or get the hell out. I compromised and, taking another UDT with me, swam to the correct beach. It checked out all clear. I asked my UDT partner for the signal pen-

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light to flash the "go-ahead" to the waiting boats. He'd lost his penlight, so back we went. I picked another swimmer and went back in, checked out the area again — still all clear — then signaled in the guerrillas.

"Two hours after arriving offshore the boats hit the beach. After getting the group organized we sent them off, dressed as Chi-Coms, into the nearby hills. During this whole time dogs from a village down the coast were barking. With all that going on — the initially missed objective, barking dogs and delay — we were damned lucky to get out undetected. And the 'lost' recon swimmer finally made it to the pickup boat, looking rather sheepish."

Later in 1951 Lt. Atcheson was back on the scene with Tofte's E&E program. "My first operation for Tofte involved the training of a small team to infiltrate a mountainous area on the east coast of North Korea between Hungnam and Chongjin ... an area reputed to be the site of a number of dissident monasteries, and supposedly known as a refuge for misfits and renegades. Or, a perfect place for E&E teams; an area that might be a good place for pilots who couldn't make it to offshore naval units to bail out. A preliminary reconnaissance was needed to determine if these reports were true, and perhaps to make contact with the monastery.

"By this time I was living on Yong Do Island in Pusan harbor at a camp maintained by the Agency for the housing and training of Han's men. A number of faces were familiar from Camp Drake days. Han assigned me six men who were to comprise the recon team that would scout the redoubt. I specifically requested that they be competent swimmers. From somewhere Tofte had managed to scrounge a regular U.S. Navy seven-man rubber boat/IBS. In and out of and through the surf we practiced intensely, righting the boat after capsizing and running other drills. I acted as coxswain and learned enough Korean to give paddling commands. After about four weeks we were ready.

"The plan called for us to be transported by the APD Begor, land the Koreans (in civilian clothes with side arms and rations) and leave them to hike up into the mountains. One week later we'd pick them up.

"The Begor's LCP towed our IBS into position and we paddled straight in. Fortunately it was a calm, starlit night — no sea or wind. From air-recon photos we had selected our landing site, a rocky beach backed by steep but apparently scalable cliffs. I swam in first to reconnoiter then signaled the boat in. The guerrillas scrambled ashore and were off.

"The only hitch came during the night we'd scheduled for team extraction. Our recon group barely made it back to the rendezvous point in time for pickup. Having reached the cliffs after dark, the team was able to make their way down. They later told us they could hear our boat chugging offshore. We, of course, couldn't see them. Time was passing and I was determined not



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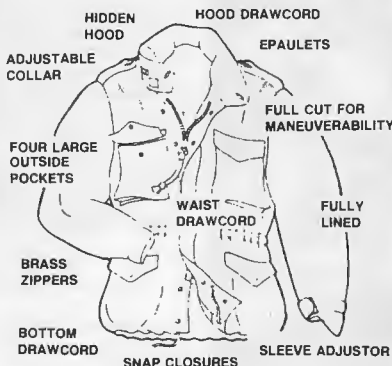
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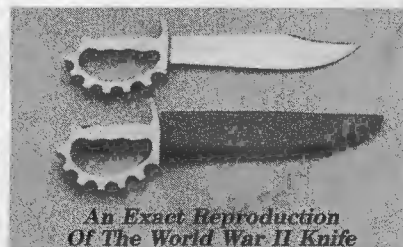
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to leave any of them stranded on the beach till daylight when the *Begor* could have been easily spotted approaching the coast, possibly alerting an NK patrol.

"So, violating my own rule of showing no light toward the shore, I decided to signal them. This thoroughly confused them and caused the team to suspect a trap. Eventually I had my seasick interpreter call to them in Korean from our IBS and we gradually coaxed them down without further mishap. The team reported having been chased earlier by an enemy patrol, thus were afraid of being caught there on the beach between those cliffs and the water. Unfortunately, no contact was made with any monastery and while the remoteness of the area was unarguable, I don't think it was ever used as an E&E team site."

Atcheson's temporary duty with the CIA in Korea also involved the kinds of missions previously executed by the Special Operations Group. He led ROK guerrillas on a number of railroad bridge demo raids. Some were successful, some weren't — much as before. For one of those operations the landing site happened to be the same small cove that had been the scene of the first successful UDT demo raid. This time, however, the results would be different.

While recon photos showed the site to be still deserted, NK forces were waiting for Atcheson and the raiding party as they hit the beach. They allowed the lead reconnaissance party to scout and signal the raid-

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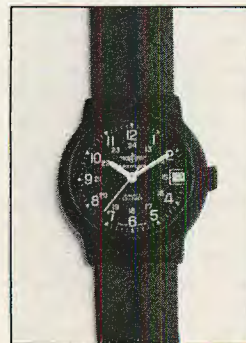


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ers in. As their rubber boats landed, the NKs rushed them, trying to capture their boats. A firefight ensued. Atcheson moved his LCP in-shore as close as possible, IBS alongside, hoping to pick up survivors. They did recover one of the ROK raiders, others making it to another boat.

"We realized later how close we'd been to the shore," Atcheson said, "when we found grenade fragments embedded in the plywood hull of the LCP. Although my interpreter in the craft was wearing a flak jacket, some of that shrapnel got in between the laminated plates under his arm and killed him. We lost about nine men on that one. All of us were pretty dejected by the time we returned to the *Begor*. It reminded me of how lucky we'd been in our earlier, successful UDT missions."

By war's end UDT One alone had conducted numerous special operations, 12 demo raids and 125 recon missions. They also pulled a variety of other specialized missions.

From 2 November to 1 December 1950, Team One conducted mine-clearing operations into the port of Chinnampo. For that unique mission, Team commander Lt. Cmdr. Kelly Welch scouted for and located the mines from a hovering helicopter deployed from the USS *Manchester*. Below, Lt. Ted Fielding, Team EOD officer "Jungle Jim" Lyon and others in LCPs would maneuver their craft to a mine located by Welch. They would then proceed to recover and disarm it. During this operation a Soviet M26 inertia-type mine was discovered, the first of its kind found during the war. After disassembling and examining it, the team sent it to Navy ordnance experts in the United States for further study.

Whether serving as "human minesweepers," clandestine demo raiders, recon experts or CIA-tasked operatives, the outstanding efforts of UDTs One, Three, and later, Five, during the Korean conflict added to the heroic legend of Underwater Demolition Teams born in WWII. In augmenting that saga, they represented the UDT methods of ingenuity, bravery and "we can do anything" boldness.

UDTs in Korea firmly established several tactical precedents while executing their secondary-become-primary mission. One cleared the way for the decade-distant formation of Navy SEAL teams. By conducting operations beyond the previous high-water-mark boundary, they blazed a trail that would later be followed by the SEALs operating in Vietnam. And in working for a fledgling CIA, UDTs in Korea set the stage for a working relationship with the Company that would continue — from clandestine operations out of Da Nang beginning 1962 to current covert ops in Central America.

The Navy's Underwater Demolition Teams were disbanded in 1983. Their legend lives on. ☒



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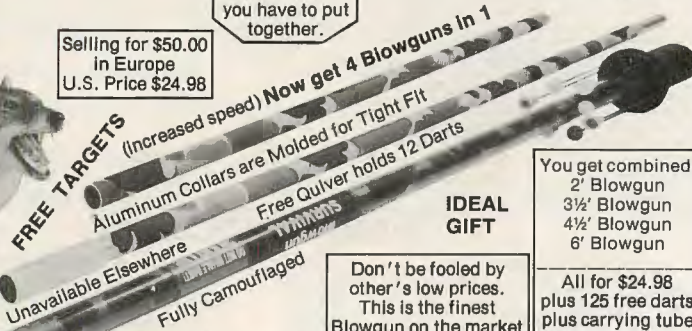
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GUERRILLA WAR IN THE HILLS

Continued from page 69

coal fields, agreed. "Mid-March 1985 was the most violent. Guard dogs had their throats slashed. At one point, guards retreated under a hail of rocks. A truck they abandoned was overturned and burned. But I still think the security forces aggravated more violence than they prevented."

Another coal field journalist, Editor Walter Massey of *The Register/Herald* in Beckley, W. Va., was criticized for characterizing union members involved in violence as "thugs." Massey, who is not related to the coal mine owners, described the union as "its own worst enemy..." If they weren't union members, what would you call people who arm themselves with clubs, maim people, shoot people, destroy vehicles, burn buildings and otherwise pillage in pursuit of their own economic interests?" Massey wrote *The Charleston Gazette* in response to a *Gazette* editorial titled "Who's For Miners?"

"Who's for civilization in West Virginia?" Massey pondered in his letter to the Charleston newspaper. "Ask the security guard of Elk Run Coal Co. in Boone County who was shot and is paralyzed for life."

Still another journalist became a victim of violence in the coal fields. Iona Andronov, a correspondent for the Moscow-based *Soviet Literary Gazette*, visited the area in late September 1985, later filing a story about how the "corrupt capitalistic" system is used to keep America's working class downtrodden.

But the local union members weren't buying his story about the "worker's paradise" in the Soviet Union. He was assaulted by three men in a pickup truck when he tried to visit a picket line in Blackberry Creek. He told investigating officers that his assailants were really management personnel posing as striking union members. Asked about the incident, members of the nearby union local in Pikeville laughed. "We may belong to a labor union, but we ain't a bunch of pussy communists," said one, declining to give his name. "Don't know who got him. One thing's sure, though. They ran that syphilitic Bolshevik right out of here."

Relative calm returned to the hills 18 months after the strike began. The private army pulled out. Most union employees of Massey were compelled by empty pocketbooks to go back to work without a new contract. The UMWA charges that Massey is out to break the union. Massey, refusing to hire miners it says were involved in strike violence, claims it was only exercising the rights of free enterprise. After a UMWA executive punched Massey's top negotiator in the mouth at an arbitration hearing in late May, one thing is certain. The calm is only the lull before the next storm. ☒

SERE SURVIVAL

Continued from page 65

four inches in diameter. By bending the trees over near the ground, I found the SERE 6 would lop off alders up to approximately 1¼-inch in diameter with one blow. Trees over that size required more work, but then this knife was never intended to be a machete. Part of the reason for this testing was to measure the edge-holding abilities of the blade. I found that cutting down several dozen alder didn't seem to affect the sharpness to any noticeable degree.

Cutting the smaller alder near the ground resulted in the SERE 6 striking rocks after passing through the tree. As a result, the front few inches of the blade received several small chips similar to those I've put in knives while cutting roots in foxholes. I figured that if stainless-steel blades are as hard to resharpen as some claim, then I'd be in trouble with my SERE 6. But it only took a few minutes' work using the gray ceramic provided with the knife to bring the blade back into shape. So much for hard-to-sharpen stainless.

I have long preferred the sharpened straight clip-type point on combat/survival knives, but this curved drop-point design may be an even better answer. The blade has plenty of curve in the primary edge for use as a tool and for slashing in combat. While the point is slightly above center line it would still deliver the force of a thrust very well. I've no idea why the false edge was left unsharpened, and for peacetime field use this isn't much of a handicap. But if I had to go into combat I'd spend some time with a file and sharpening stone to make sure the false edge of the SERE 6 was as sharp as the primary edge — resulting in a good close-combat weapon. Another version of the SERE 6 with a row of sawteeth on the false edge will be available sometime later this year.

Those who think handguards are for parrying hostile blades probably won't care for the low-profile design on the SERE 6. Al and I are both of the school of thought that the only real purpose of a handguard is to keep your hand off the blade; try to parry a blade with *any* knife guard and you stand to lose most of your fingers. The guard on this knife will serve its purpose without constantly snagging on gear or brush. I think Al should have found some way to subdue the bright steel of the bolsters; in Vietnam I covered the handguard and grips of my knife with green tape, but a black finish would be better. This is also true of the polished micarta slabs. I'd prefer a flat finish and some type of checkering for a better grip. On the plus side, though, the large handle is comfortable even when used for chopping strokes.

The scabbard is of good quality, but like the handguard the leather is polished up too much. Either a flat black finish or camouflaged cover material such as found on the original SERE Survival scabbard would be

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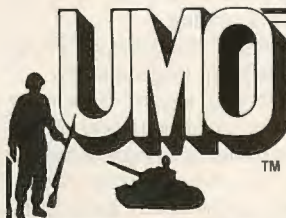
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safer in combat. I liked the idea of the stone pouch on the front of the scabbard, but the ceramic is too small for it and tends to rattle around. If nothing else, cram a rag in the pouch to keep the noise down.

At \$175 the SERE 6 is in the same price range as many of the Randall combat knives and some other custom-made knives. Its quality is definitely up to the best standards, and once Al gets into full production availability should be much better than the long waiting periods many custom knives require.

I would have been happy to carry a SERE 6 during my time in Vietnam, and I highly recommend it to anyone looking for a good combat or survival knife. For more information contact Al Mar Knives, 5755 SW Jean Rd. Suite 101, Lake Oswego, OR 97034. ✕

THE MOST OF R&R

Continued from page 32

"Cut myself," he shrugged, and wrapped a soiled handkerchief around his hand. Mama's diversion had postponed trouble but I didn't know how long the lull would last.

I needn't have worried. She had taken no chances. Benton raised his head, opened his mouth to speak and fell to the floor with a thud. My attempts to rouse him failed. When two Colonial Infantry officers helped me lift him into his chair he was as limp and pliable as a rubber doll. Mama was by my side, relieved and smiling.

"No more worry," she assured. "Finish talkee-talkee. He sleep long time now."

Before I sought help to carry Benton out to the jeep I picked up his glass and sniffed it. It had the rank odor of a stagnant Saigon canal, the stink of a chemical plant's drainage pipe. I didn't ask Mama for her Mickey Finn recipe. I felt it best not to know. Whatever it was it kept Benton in bed for two days and out of harm's way.

A week later I introduced my boss to Mama's. "Blackjack" Masterson was the type of character one doesn't find in today's foreign service. An outspoken, gravel-voiced ex-newspaperman, Masterson had been in tight situations all over the world. He had little patience with protocol and much less with any colleague who revealed symptoms of pretense or stuffiness. Once, in a crisis situation, he had gone directly to a high official of the Vietnamese government, ignoring the fussy chain of command of the U.S. diplomatic structure in Saigon. When a ranking American officer accused him of going over his head, Masterson had wasted no time in making his position clear.

"Listen, you dumb bastard," he'd told the shocked product of the striped pants school. "I'll go over your head or under your ass anytime I have to. You may not realize it but people are getting killed in this war."

Independently wealthy, Masterson had brought his Cadillac to Saigon as a personal vehicle. This created certain problems. The

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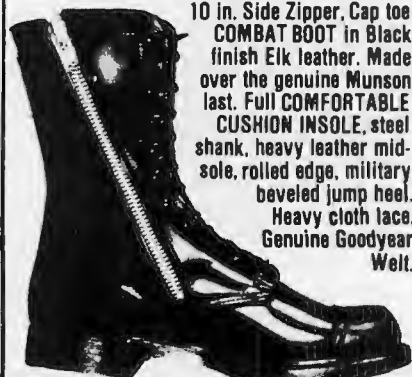
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ambassador's official car, a battered Packard, had seen better days. On one occasion, when Masterson drove up to attend a reception at the prime minister's palace, the ceremonial guard rendered him the full honors intended for the ambassador. The ambassador, arriving a few minutes later, pulled in under the portico as the honor guard dispersed.

Masterson was a happily married man with an attractive, charming wife but he had a newsman's curiosity and a leader's sense of responsibility. We had been to an official cocktail at the Hotel Continental to welcome a new French general. It had been particularly boring. After a few drinks Masterson decided it was time he took a look at Mama's. He had never been there but the tales he'd heard from his own staff and various newsmen had piqued his curiosity.

The rainy season had begun and we drove to Mama's in a torrential downpour. The warm pavement steamed under the deluge and sections of the road were already flooded. I suggested we park directly in front of Mama's to avoid walking through the downpour.

Masterson swung the wheel, pointed the black hood of the Cadillac at the door and reached out for the footbrake. The damp rubber sole of his shoe slipped off the brake pedal with a thunk. We glided majestically and irretrievably forward. The door buckled, splintered and ripped from its hinges; a table crunched under our wheels and split; a supporting beam in our path snapped and the roof came down in slow motion to rest on top of the Cadillac.

Luckily it had been a quiet night. But our unexpected entry sent everyone scrambling over tables and clambering up the anti-grenade netting like chickens threatened by a hungry fox. As the dust settled and the last hunk of loose roofing clunked down, Mama launched a tirade equal to the last act of a Chinese play or a Vietnamese funeral lament. Her voice cut the heavy air like a rasp, rising and falling in volume. She mixed Vietnamese, French and English words in a medley of curses and recriminations that quickly drew an audience. Cyclo drivers, street vendors, small children, French soldiers on their way to the Parc Aux Buffles and ancient Chinese amahs crowded around.

A shaken French officer appeared, hurriedly buttoning his trousers. He took one look at the crowd of spectators and retreated back to the room he had just left. Two skinny Vietnamese policemen in white shorts and pith helmets arrived on the scene, decided that since the Cadillac was off the street it was no longer within their jurisdiction and walked off, relieved.

Masterson handled the situation with his usual down-to-earth aplomb. He raised his deep voice till it matched and dominated Mama's caterwauling. He quickly made it clear that he would pay for all the damage and ordered three bottles of champagne. He even persuaded a two-man patrol of the Gendarmerie Militaire to join us in several glasses.

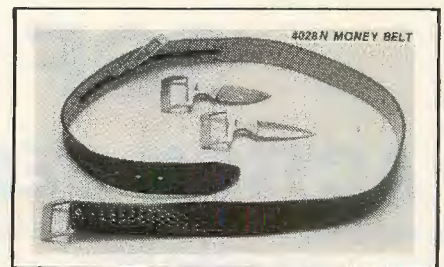
Later, after we had propped up the roof and eased the Cadillac out onto the street, Masterson drove me home. He dropped me off in front of my apartment as a new wave of rolling thunder shook the city and lightning flashed through the agitated palms.

"See that someone from administration gets over there tomorrow to get going on the repairs," he told me. Then he smiled and rubbed his chin. "The ambassador's got enough problems," he suggested. "I don't think we should bother him or anyone at the embassy with our accident." I agreed.

Months after the repairs were completed Mama was still regaling her customers with a highly dramatic version of our unusual entry. The Cadillac had taken on the proportions of an assault tank and she, as the heroine, had single-handedly saved the lives of her employees. Word of our escape eventually got back to the embassy. An embassy officer, and notorious stuffed shirt, tried to beard Masterson one night at an official dinner within earshot of the ambassador.

"Mr. Masterson," the officer asked patronizingly, "have you ever heard of the Saigon bordello called Mama's?"

In the expectant, shocked silence that followed the women busied themselves with their consommé or dabbed at their lips with their napkins. Masterson took enough time to contemplate his questioner with the attention one would give a worm found in the mayonnaise.



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"Yes," Masterson finally replied, in his best tough-guy manner, "I understand it's the only drive-in whorehouse in Saigon." ❌

FULL AUTO

Continued from page 14

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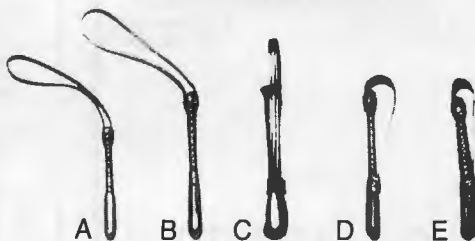
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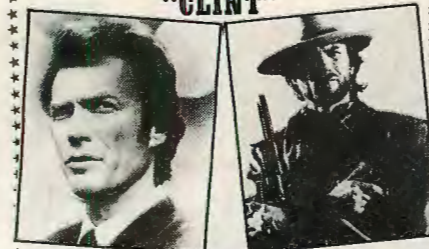
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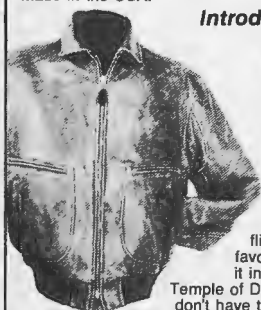
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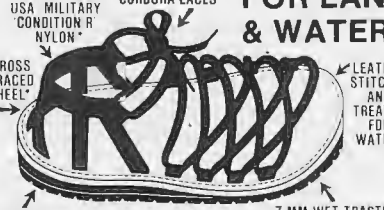
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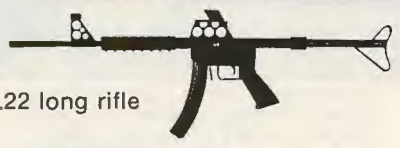
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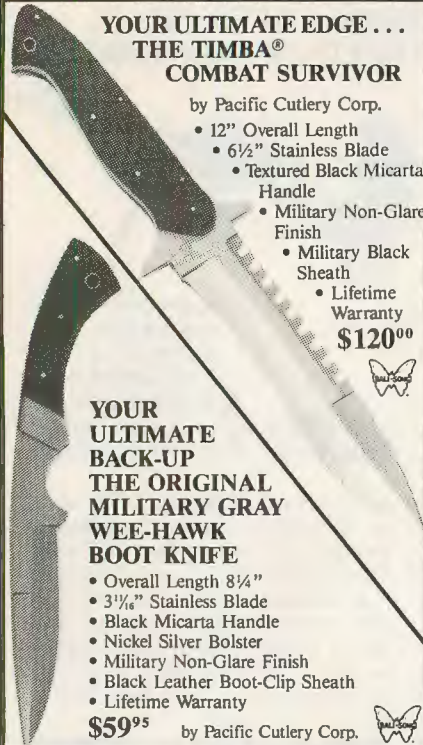
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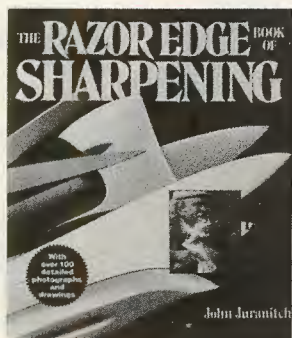
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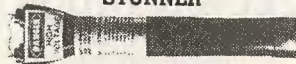
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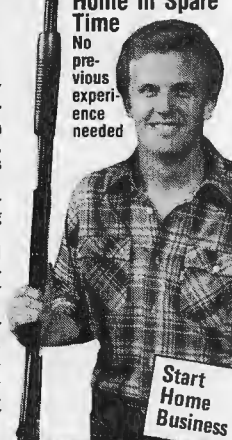
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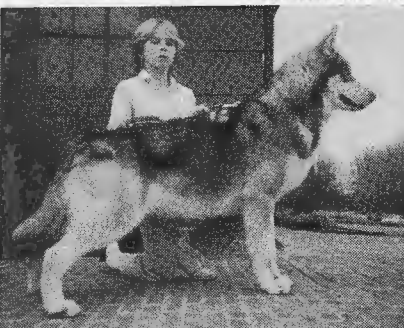
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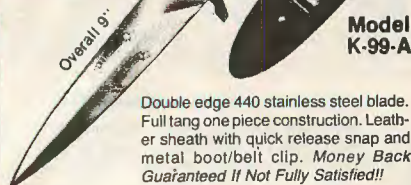
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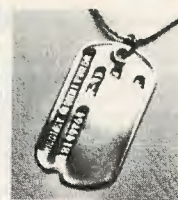
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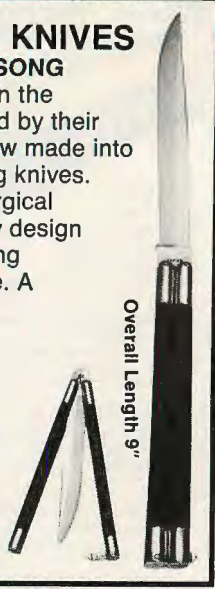
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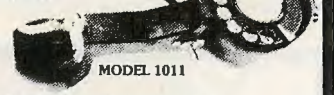


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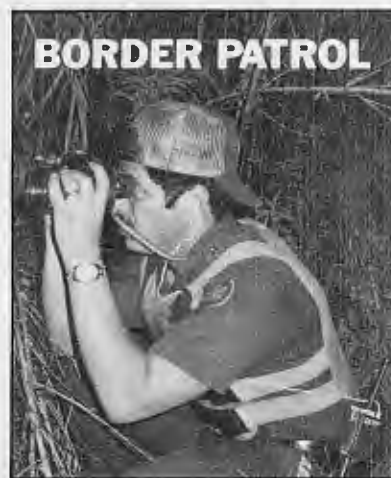
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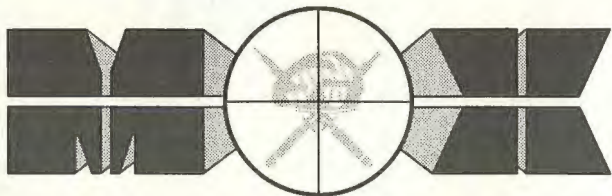
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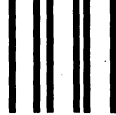
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